SELECTIONS

FROM THE

Records of the Government of India,

HOME DEPARTMENT.

No. LXXXVIII.

CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE PROPOSAL FOR FORMING, BY A SYSTEM OF LOCAL TAXATION, THE FUNDS REQUIRED FOR RELIEF PURPOSES ON OCCASIONS OF FAMINE.

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CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE PROPOSAL FOR FORMING, BY A SYSTEM OF LOCAL TAXATION, THE FUNDS REQUIRED FOR RELIEF PURPOSES ON OCCASIONS OF FAMINE.

Nos. 2788-2797, dated Simla, the 7th June 1870.

Circular from—E. C. BAYLEY, ESQ., C. S. I., Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Department.

To—The Local Governments and Administrations.

IN Part III. of their General Report, the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, discussed at some length the question of the future liability of the country to famine, and the means of mitigating such calamities; and in paragraphs 63 to 73 of that document they submitted certain suggestions which occurred to them for raising, by a system of local taxation, the funds required on such extraordinary occasions to afford relief to the sufferers.

2. The questions involved in the suggestions made by the Commissioners are of extreme importance. They are, however, surrounded by difficulties of considerable magnitude, affecting a variety of interests, and requiring the solution of some administrative problems of very great moment.

3. But the scarcity in the Upper Provinces, almost immediately following the famine in Orissa, and the recent epidemic fever which made terrible havoc in certain Districts in Lower Bengal, have pressed upon the Government of India the necessity of inquiring how far those difficulties, however serious they may be, are practically insurmountable.

4. Liberal contributions from the imperial exchequer may become absolutely necessary when calamities like those above-mentioned reach such a point as to make adequate relief by any other means impossible. But before such an unfortunate climax is attained, State help is attended by mischievous consequences of a very serious nature, such as the withering up of private charity, not to speak of the financial disturbance which inevitably follows such a course of action.

5. I am directed to forward a copy of the suggestions* made by the Famine Commissioners, and to request that † will take the subject into His/your most careful consideration, and, after communicating with such officers as he/you may wish to consult, favour the Government of India with the conclusions at which he/you may arrive, with a copy of the opinions given by the officers consulted.

* Paragraphs 63 to 73.

† *Madras* ... } His Excellency the Governor in Council
Bombay ... }
Bengal ... } His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor
N. W. Provs. ... }
Punjab ... }
Oudh ... } you
Central Provs. ... }
British Burmah... }
Coorg ... }
Hyderabad ... }

Extract, paragraphs 63 *to* 73, *from the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in* 1866.

PARA. 63. All precautions taken and all improvements made, poverty, scarcity, and famine must still, as the world is now constituted, recur, and it remains to consider how these misfortunes are to be dealt with.

We have already alluded to the effect of changes which, while rendering the person more free, society more advanced, and labour in one sense more independent, may also, by loosening the ties of personal interdependence, render the poorer classes less capable of withstanding calamities of season. We must repeat a doubt whether the labouring classes of England or France could withstand a general enhancement of the price of food to twice or thrice its ordinary price as do the natives of India. Suppose the price of wheat to be suddenly raised to 120 or 150 shillings per quarter, beef and mutton to half a crown a pound, and all other articles of food in proportion, what would be the state of things then or even long before that point had been reached? That is, in fact, much the same thing which occurs in India when rice in Orissa, or wheat at Agra, rises to 11 or 12 seers per rupee, and yet up to that point the people of many Districts of India seem to be now, under favourable conditions, prepared to bear up for a time. But we must not blind ourselves to the fact that every step in advance, in the modern sense, tends to render them as dependent on daily wages as more civilised labourers. Under the purely Native system almost every man is more or less a farmer, or the immediate personal dependent of a farmer who has his banker and his banker's book and the credit which enables him to live from year to year rather than from day to day. But all our commerce and our enterprize, our great works and improved systems, create or increase the class of laborers depending on regular wages, and all increase of private wealth, enabling the richer to entertain laborers who are no longer slaves or serfs, adds to the class. If we should succeed in simplifying property in land in the hands of sole proprietors of considerable

estates, the mass of the peasantry must either become laborers for hire or tenants-at-will, whose rents are regulated on commercial principles, and who have no longer the beneficial interest in the soil on which their present credit is founded. It may be that, with the increase of general wealth, the laborer will eventually be, in ordinary times, better off than he ever was before, but that he will as well resist extraordinary seasons we do not deem probable. There is, we believe, reason to expect a gradual increase in the classes who may hardly withstand a scarcity not amounting to that extreme famine which involves the whole population.

64. On the other hand, if the accumulation of wealth increases, the number of rich and charitable residents of large towns, the need on the part of the rich for luxuries before unknown, very largely increases; the feudal interdependence of the people diminishes as Native rulers are exchanged for proprietors, and the Native public endowments and charities diminish in number and in efficiency when no longer supported by Native Governments and official superintendence. On the whole the sources of voluntary relief of the poor are probably diminished.

65. The disadvantages attending any poor law are so great that we would still not recommend that resource in ordinary seasons. We have several times alluded to the wonderful way in which Natives recognise the personal obligations of supporting their own poor. As long as any of a family, it may almost be said any of a clan, have the means of supporting their indigent relations and connections, they do so in a marvellous and admirable way. Only when calamity either reduces whole families and classes to starvation, or brings them so low that, on the principle of two on a plank, some must inevitably be sacrificed, large numbers are cast out either to die or to be saved by public charity. So long as the social feeling which dictates the sacrifices enabling the Natives to support one another may suffice, hard as the system may appear on the poor, we would not interfere. Any action which should endanger the present ties might bring with it other and greater evils.

66. But when this point is once passed, and, if we are right, it will be more and more frequently over-passed, some system of relief becomes necessary. It would be inexpedient to encourage a too frequent appeal to the general public for local objects; these might be multiplied till the public becomes callous, and the resource so necessary on great occasions might, in a great degree, be lost. Experience proves that the voluntary local charity of rural Districts is insufficient to meet heavy calls on it. It would be too heavy a burden on the Government that it should be required to afford the relief necessary on every such occasion, and the facility of obtaining the aid of Government and of the public funds would be still more liable to abuse than a too frequent appeal to a charitable general public.

67. It may be apprehended that one of the effects of the recent unhappy events, and more especially of the unfortunate errors which have occurred on the side of too much discouraging or resisting applications

for public aid, will be that such applications may, in future, be made very constantly and very freely, perhaps too much so; and that being made men in authority will have great difficulty in resisting them, and will feel it a very heavy risk and responsibility to do so, even when they are not quite convinced of the certainty of the necessity.

68. On the whole, looking at present circumstances in every view, it appears to us that the time has come when to relieve, not ordinary poverty, but the wider poverty of extraordinary occasions, it is necessary to institute some system of local taxation by which the richer persons of each neighbourhood, who are best able to test the reality of local distress, may be made to bear the burden of local and partial famine, so far as local means will suffice, before, as a last resource in graver cases, resort is had to the general taxation and the general charity of the country. In the abstract it might be most fair that all should bear alike any visitations of Providence in any part of the empire; but, on the other hand, there is all over the world so great a tendency to be over-charitable to our neighbours with other people's money that it seems to be absolutely necessary in some way to localise all taxation for the poor, except in case of the most extreme calamity surpassing every local means.

69. It has yet to be shown that the charity which takes the shape of distribution of food in times of scarcity, and which the Natives consider a cardinal virtue, will not, if well used and guided, suffice to support the poor of towns. Excepting only the special case of large bodies of people following a declining trade (as in some of the weaver towns) we believe that this town charity will generally suffice for the town population, and even for much of the permanent poverty of the surrounding tracts; it is only when masses of the population of the country are thrown on the towns that, under ordinary conditions, the resources of these latter are over-burdened. The question is, how to deal with rural distress. The obligation of the zemindars, holding under the permanent settlement, to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government, and has never, we believe, been denied by the organs of the zemindars, although sufficient effect has not been given to the obligation by precise law, and we have seen that in practice it has been ignored or evaded. The obligation is, in fact, one which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country, but which has been transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindars.

70. We cannot make any recommendation of universal application because the circumstances of different Provinces are so different, and in many the Government, as still in some sense superior landlord, receives its revenue direct from the cultivators either individually or in corporate self-governed communities. But as respects the permanently settled Provinces our opinion is, that the obligation which the zemindars accepted with the permanent settlement, but which they have now failed to fulfil, should be put into practical operation, and that local taxation or the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindary rights to be

enforced by law. We would recommend that on the occurrence of scarcity of such degree that the population are unable to support themselves, the zemindars shall be bound to support the poor of their estates by supplying food in return for labour to the able-bodied who are unable to obtain employment, and by feeding gratuitously the helpless unable to labour; that in the event of their failing to do so the officer in charge of the District shall be empowered to call together a fairly constituted jury to decide whether or not the distress is such as to require relief, and if it is to assess on the pergunnah the amount required to enable the public officers to afford the relief which the zemindars have failed to afford. Arrangements might be made for enabling any body of zemindars willing to fulfil the obligation thus thrown on them to do so by a self-imposed rate and to manage both the tax and the expenditure of the money.

71. It might be provided, as on similar occasions in England and Ireland, that when the rate thus assessed exceeds a certain proportion of the rental an assessment on the District should be made, and that when the charge on the whole District exceeds the prescribed maximum, assistance should be given from the public exchequer. It would also be fair to provide that the zemindar should be entitled to recover from all persons holding a permanent transferable interest, at a fixed rent intermediate between himself and the ryots, a share of the rate assessed, proportioned to their respective shares in the profits of the land. To provide against too great pressure on those deriving their income from the land in a year of scarcity the Government should be empowered to advance money to be recovered as land revenue by a rate spread over several years.

72. The result of an arrangement, such as we have described, would be somewhat as follows:

Ordinary poverty would still be left to private charity.

Extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the land enforced by law.

The most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people would be a charge on the general revenues of the country, and the subject of appeal to the charity of the general public throughout the country.

73. As respects the distribution of the duties thrown in the last case on Government and the public, we think that there can be no better rule than that which has hitherto obtained, *viz.*, that Government should supply employment by means of public works, and that the public should supply the means of gratuitous relief to the helpless.

No. 451, dated Fort St. George, the 15th March 1871.

From—W. Hudleston, Esq., Secy. to the Govt. of Fort St. George.

To—E. C. Bayley, Esq., c. s. i., Secy. to the Govt. of India.

Referring to your letter dated 7th June 1870, No. 2788, requesting the opinion of this Government on the suggestion of the Famine Commissioners for raising funds by local taxation to afford relief on extraordinary occasions of calamity, I am directed to forward, for submission to the Government of India, the accompanying copies of papers on the subject noted in the margin, and to state that this Government generally concur in the dissent therein expressed from the Commissioners' proposals.

Proceedings of Government, 15th March 1871, Nos. 187 and 188.

2. In your letter under reply it is observed that State help, rendered before it has become absolutely necessary, is likely have to the effect of withering up private charity; but this Government are strongly of opinion that special taxation for the relief of the poor would far more speedily and certainly produce this result, and with far more fatal effect; for, in the former case, the worst that could result would be that what was no longer needed would be no longer given, while, in the latter case, the Government would have deprived the sufferers of almost indispensable assistance by introducing a measure which must inevitably be least productive when the need is greatest; for it is not apparently contemplated that the measure of taxation should extend beyond the locality where extensive distress exists, or that more fortunate Districts should contribute for the relief of those which may be suffering.

3. The system advocated by the Commissioners is that of "local taxation, by which the richer persons of each neighbourhood * * may be made to bear the burden of local and partial famine." They argue that the obligation resting on the zemindars, under the permanent settlement, to support the poor of their estates, has always been asserted by the officers of Government, has never been denied by the organs of the zemindars, but has practically "*been ignored or evaded.*" That this obligation attached to Government while it was the great landholder of the country, but was transferred to the zemindars at the permanent settlement;

and that this obligation, "*which they have failed to fulfil*," should be enforced in the shape of a legal charge on zemindari rights on the occurrence of scarcity of such a degree that the population are unable to support themselves.

4. It may be remarked, in the first place, that the system thus sketched would be of very limited application in this Presidency, where permanently settled zemindars are few in number, and where the obligation said to have been transferred by Government to the zemindars at the permanent settlement must still rest on the Government as regards the great bulk of the population who hold their land directly from the State; but for the credit of humanity this Government are glad to be able to say that the condemnation of zemindars in the late seasons of famine is by no means applicable to those in this Presidency, whose conduct on the contrary was, as a rule, highly creditable and deserving of all commendation. This Government, however, cannot think that zemindars, as such, are under any peculiar obligation to support sufferers by scarcity or famine. This duty rests on all the community alike in accordance with their means, and the zemindars of this Presidency are not, as a rule, men of wealth, while in times of famine they are sufferers also to a serious extent by the failure of crops, and consequently the loss of rents payable both in money and in kind.

5. This Government are of opinion that the Native community do undoubtedly fulfil the obligation of supporting their poor in a most creditable manner, and that anything like compulsion would be most mischievous and would defeat its aim. They consider that the proposal for a famine-tax is not one that should be entertained, but that as the ultimate responsibility for saving life must rest on the State, such relief as is needed for this purpose should be provided from the general revenues, aided by voluntary contributions. It must be borne in mind that a famine-stricken District has, *primâ facie*, special claims for State aid, on the probable ground of previous neglect in a greater or less degree, owing to which safeguards against famine are there wanting which have elsewhere been provided in the form of irrigation works or perfected systems of communication, by means of which supplies can be readily thrown into the market whenever the demand offers inducement.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Madras in the Revenue Department, dated Fort St. George, the 15th March 1871.

[No. 187.] READ the following letter:

No. 597, dated Madras, the 8th February 1871.

From—The Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

To—The Secretary to the Government of Madras, Revenue Dept.

WITH reference to Government Order dated 29th June 1870, No. 966, I am directed to submit the accompanying reports on the subject of raising funds by local taxation to afford relief on occasions of extraordinary scarcity.

2. The Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866 argue that as society advances the dependence of the poorer classes on daily wages instead of land, and their consequent inability to withstand calamities of season, increases, whilst the ties between the poor and rich are weakened, and the sources of voluntary relief are probably diminished.

3. This argument is inapplicable to the circumstances of the Madras Presidency. Two-thirds at least of the population are raising their own food. The land is divided amongst them in comparatively small portions, and there is no sign that this condition of things is altering. Private charity is rendered by the rich to the poor, and even by the poor to one another in a "marvellous and admirable way;" and if this *local* charity withers, as it must, under the proposed system of taxation, it would be impossible to devise any tax short of confiscation which would furnish the same amount of assistance to the poor. They would lose and not gain by such a measure.

4. The Commissioners argue that the zemindars in Bengal are bound to support the poor of their estates in times of scarcity, *because* they relieved Government from this obligation when they took their Sanads. This being the case, it follows that in the Madras Presidency, where Government have retained the obligation, they must meet it from their general revenues.

5. But if it is determined to levy the tax on ryots, it must be levied on the greatest sufferers at the time when they can least bear the pressure.

6. It is in the nature of a scarcity that it should impoverish the resources of its victims, and oblige them to look for aid to others who have escaped the same misfortune.

7. It would be a cruel law which would tax poor Districts where scarcities often occur, such as Bellary and Ganjam, whilst it let rich Districts, where famines never occur, such as Tanjore, go scot free.

8. It seems to the Board to be a national duty for the whole empire to aid any portion of it, which is crushed by calamities, such as scarcity or war, and the expenditure, being eminently reproductive, might well be met by loans.

9. The extravagance which occurs in the administration of State money is an undeniable evil, but the Board believe it to be less when grants-in-aid are given in times of scarcity and famine than it is when grants are made for any other purpose.

[No. 188.] ORDER THEREON No. 450.

THE Government agree generally in the views stated by the Board, and the papers will be forwarded to the Government of India with an expression of their concurrence.

2. The Government desire to direct the Board's attention to the remarks of Mr. J. H. Master (paragraph 5) as to the frequent sales of enfranchised inams for arrears of quit-rent, on which subject they wish to receive further information, and to learn whether the same state of things exists in other Districts; also to Mr. Whiteside's report (paragraphs 20 and 21) of the dissatisfaction felt by the zemindars of North Arcot as to the mode in which the District Road Cess is expended, whereby their estates derive no benefit at all commensurate with the contribution received from them. This state of things will, it is hoped, be remedied in great measure by the amended Act; but the Government desire to know how far similar grounds of complaint exist in other zemindaries.

3. The Board's attention is also called to Mr. Boswell's remarks (paragraph 15 of his letter) as to the oppressive effect of the revised settlement of the revenue demand on some parts of his District. In the G. O. of 30th September 1864, sanctioning its introduction, the Government anticipated that some further revision might prove necessary, and the Board were authorized to confirm any reduction which might be found necessary in carrying out the settlement. The recent and continuing fall in prices will aggravate any over-valuation of the capabilities of the land, and close attention should be given to the subject.

4. The remarks of the Bellary Deputy Collector at paragraph 25 of his letter as to the burdensome effect of the seigniorage levied on firewood call for inquiry, and the Government desire that the attention of the Collector may be directed to the subject.

(True Extract.)

W. HUDLESTON,

Secy. to the Govt. of Madras.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue,—No. 4921, dated Madras, the 18th July 1870.

READ the following Proceedings of the Madras Government, No. 966, dated 29th June 1870, Revenue Department:

Read the following letter:

No. 2788 R, dated Simla, the 7th June 1870. From—E. C. BAYLEY, ESQ., Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Dept. To—W. HUDLESTON, ESQ., Secretary to the Government of Fort St. George.	*Printed above.*

ORDER THEREON No. 966, dated the 29th June 1870.

COMMUNICATED to the Board of Revenue, who are requested to favor the Government with a report, after calling upon the most experienced and competent revenue officers of the Presidency for an expression of their views on the question raised by the Government of India.

(True Extract.)

R. S. ELLIS,

Chief Secy., Govt. of Madras.

COMMUNICATED to all Collectors for full and early report.

2. The following points should be specially attended to :

(1.) The tenures and settlement of the District and the rate of taxation.

(2.) The ability of landedowners to bear extra taxation in times of famine, considering how the land tax is paid.

(3.) The extent to which grain and money are hoarded in the District.

3. The Commissioners dwell most on the obligations of zemindars, and in Districts where they exist, the Collector's reports should deal fully with this portion of the subject and show what their circumstances are.

(True Extract.)

J. GROSE,

Acting Secy., Board of Revenue, Madras.

No. 1449, dated Chetterpore, the 3rd November 1870.

From—G. Ellis, Esq., Acting Collector of Ganjam.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy., Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 4921, dated 18th July 1870, forwarding extracts from the report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, and calling for report on the subjects therein discussed.

2. I must confess that I approach the consideration of such a subject with the utmost diffidence, for, while I fully admit the moral obligation the wealthy are under to assist the suffering poor in times of distress and famine, it is difficult to advocate the imposition of a fresh tax, which, to a certain extent, will be borne by those only who dwell in the rural Districts.

* * * * * *

5. The zemindars and proprietors hold their estates on a permanently settled tenure. When originally settled it seems that it was the intention of Government to secure to itself two-thirds of the gross revenue in the shape of peshcush, leaving one-third to the proprietors. Since the original settlement, however, the position of the zemindars has improved in a very remarkable degree, insomuch that the gross revenue derived by them bears in some instances the proportion of 3 to 500 per cent. of the peshcush. The revenue derived from the proprietary estates is not so large, but in no case does it fall below 100 per cent. of the peshcush.

6. All the ancient zemindaries, and certainly some of the proprietary estates, *are able to bear extra taxation in time of famine*, the difficulty is to determine the rate at which it should be imposed.

7. I have reason to believe that the zemindars in this District did (with one or two exceptions), when the melancholy necessity arose in 1866, their duty towards the poor of their estates, and I very much fear that when they hear that their contributions are to be made the subject of legislative enactment the fountains of their private charity will either dry up, or they will make the interference of the Imperial Government the excuse for recouping themselves in the many different ways that will occur to the Native proprietor.

8. It is by no means an easy task to tabulate or collect any data that are sufficiently reliable for the purpose of ascertaining the cost incurred by the zemindar in supporting his poor, and I have been obliged to take, as the cost of supporting a person so helpless as to be unable to labor, that incurred by Government in its relief houses in this District during the famine as that on which to base my calculation. This amounted to Rupees 1-4 per mensem. I believe that the

Government relief houses were managed most economically, and that it would have been difficult to have afforded sufficient relief for a less amount.

9. The Callicote zemindar, I am informed, established relief houses at which, for a period of about four months, 2,000 persons were fed daily; supposing the cost to have been that incurred in the Government relief houses, he must have spent about Rupees 10,000, or a rate of seven per cent. *for the time* on his net income, and this only in aid of those who resorted to his relief houses.

The cost incurred by Government for a period of eight months in relieving the helpless poor of *the Berhampore talook* and two or three petty estates was two lakhs of rupees, and it is to be borne in mind that the severity of the distress was felt principally in the northern part of the District only.

10. A *general* tax for famine relief, levied at the present rate of income tax, would not produce more than Rupees 60,000 a year. Were the zemindars or proprietors expected to pay a rate as liberal as that self-imposed by the Callicote zemindar, it would amount to *no less than* 21 *per cent.* on their incomes—an amount so enormously oppressive that the idea of levying it is not to be entertained for a moment. In submitting, therefore, these remarks to the Board I feel unable to suggest any rate which, sufficient for the purposes of relief, would not be unduly oppressive to the zemindar. Should this District unhappily be again visited by famine, I venture, but at the same time with great hesitation, to suggest that, small as the amount would be in aid of the sufferers, a general tax, say from two to three per cent., should be levied on all incomes now assessed with income tax, the additional funds required to relieve the necessities of the helpless being contributed by Government.

11. Every person who can afford to do so hoards or stores grain in sufficient quantities to provide for at least six months' consumption, but it is quite impossible to get at any data on which an approximate estimate can be made as to the amount thus stored.

Much of the produce of the District is exported and much grain imported from the Cuttack District, but we have no returns to distinguish between the export of home and foreign products.

12. Without domiciliary visits I am unable to comprehend how any information is to be obtained as to the amount of *money* hoarded by the people.

No. 658, dated the 25th August 1870.

From—R. J. Melville, Esq., Offg. Collector of Vizagapatam.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy., Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to forward the report called for by the Board of Revenue in their Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July 1870.

2. 1*st.*—*The tenures and settlements of the District and rate of taxation.*—With the exception of the Government Talooks of Sarvasiddhi and Golgonda and the estate of Palcondah, which is rented by Messrs. Arbuthnot and Co., the whole of this District is in the hands of zemindars. At the permanent settlement, the Government in most instances took two-thirds of the gross produce and left one-third to the zemindars; but in some of the Havally estates the Government share amounted to four-fifths of the whole. Owing to various causes the present proportion the Government share bears to that enjoyed by the zemindar is, in the case of the former, one-third to half, and in the latter half to three-fifths.

3. Speaking generally it may be stated that throughout the zemindaries the ryot pays his landlord's rent in money, which is a fixed assessment on the land. There are exceptions, as, for instance, in some villages of the Viziangaram zemindaree, one-eighth of the rent is paid in grain when the crop is paddy, and in one or two of the minor estates the rent is entirely paid in grain; but this is quite the exception.

4. It is by no means easy to arrive at an opinion as to the rate of taxation as compared with other Districts, as there has been no survey of the cultivated lands, and the only land measures known are in reality grain measures, *e. g.*, garces and vissams. From what I have been able to learn, I should be inclined to say that the land tax is most felt in the Government Talooks. This is partly owing to the general poverty of the soil and to the nature of the works of irrigation, small rainfed tanks, and also in a great measure to our habit of fostering a class of unsubstantial ryots who can only keep themselves above water in favorable seasons. In zemindaries these ryots find their proper level as farm-labourers. In the zemindaries, as a rule, I do not believe that the lands are over-assessed, though no doubt rents have been generally raised. Palcondah is particularly favorably situated both as regards rain-fall and natural means of irrigation, and there also the land tax is collected with ease.

5. What I have just stated is borne out by what happened during the season of 1868-69—a period of scarcity. It appears from the letters of my predecessor that in spite of an almost total failure of the north-east monsoons, the rents in the zemindaries were generally paid to the landlords in the usual instalments. That there was no necessity for remission, though in some cases time was given to the ryot to pay the last instalment. In Palcondah no remission was required. In the Government Talooks there was a necessity for considerable remission, and the pressure was greatest in that part of the District.

I should say that, generally speaking, this District is by no means heavily taxed.

6. *The ability of landedowners to bear extra taxation in time of famine.*—As stated above, the landowners in this District receive their

rent in money, and consequently do not benefit by a rise in the price of grain, which is a consequence of scarcity. They are, in fact, rather consumers than producers, and suffer in common with other consumers by a rise in prices. If the scarcity increases to a famine after the day labourer, and poorest class of ryot, the zemindar is as great a sufferer as any. He is unable to get in his rents, or supposing his ryots to be exceptionally well off, he has to postpone the collection of them. This is the time chosen by the writers of the report, recorded in the proceedings under reply, to make them the exclusive objects of a special tax. In paragraph 65 they admit the "marvellous" and "admirable" way in which "Natives"—a term which includes zemindars—support one another. With this admission they make the astounding proposition to impose a tax till now unheard of, a poor rate to be levied from a particular class, and from that class at a time when they are necessarily in difficulties, while those to whom a famine means profit, merchants and corn-dealers, escape scot free. A rate to be levied specially from the mill-owners, and from no one else for the compulsory support of the mill-hands during a Lancashire cotton famine, is the only parallel that occurs to me.

7. The assertion of the obligation of zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates, sound strange, coming as it does from a Presidency where it has only just been decided after a long and doubtful controversy, that the zemindars are liable to any burden, except the payment to Government of the peshcush fixed in their sunnuds. If, however, there be such an obligation, it would be as well to remember that in ryotwary Districts it would fall on Government, who in those Districts have succeeded to the place of the zemindar. I need hardly say that, putting the justice of such a course aside, I am of opinion that land-owners are not more able than any other class to bear extra taxation in time of famine. I am further of opinion that any attempt to introduce such a system would tend to put a stop to that private charity for which on the last occasion of severe dearth the zemindars of this District were honorably distinguished—(*vide* Mr. Carmichael's letter in Board's Proceedings No. 6576, dated 13th September 1866).

8. Perhaps this is the best place to say a few words as to the justice of localizing taxation for the poor in times of dearth. Some Districts in this Presidency are more liable to famine than others. Some of the latter, *e. g.*, Tanjore, the Godavery, the Kistna, would owe their comparative immunity to the large sums out of the imperial revenues spent on public works, so that because they have had more than their share of the public revenues spent within their limits, they are to enjoy the further advantage of not being called on to contribute to the wants of poorer Districts.

9. *The extent to which grain and money is hoarded.*—The grain produce of this District in an average year amounts to about 16 months' consumption. The ryots, as a rule, are well enough to do to be able to wait for a favorable market for their grain. It is difficult to learn with any degree of accuracy the amount of grain stored, but it may be assumed that there are few villages in which considerable stores of grain would not be found. The amount stored may be roughly estimated at six months' consumption for the District. This is exclusive of Jeypore, from whence large stores of grain could be obtained. The money in hand generally appears in the form of jewellery on the persons of the females of the ryot's family.

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No. 174, dated Guvalchervoo, the 24th September 1870.

From—G. VANSAGNEW, ESQ., Collector of Cuddapah.

To—J. GROSE, ESQ., Acting Secy., Board of Revenue, Madras.

ADVERTING to the Proceedings of the Board, dated 18th July last, No. 4921, I have the honor to subjoin a report on the subject by Mr. Storr, the Acting Sub-Collector. The only other divisional officer who has favored me with his opinion, briefly states that "there are no persons in his division from whom to levy contribution to the fund," and, in truth, there is little more to be said of the whole District.

2. There are no zemindaries and very few ryots with large holdings. The lands are most capriciously assessed, and, looking to the natural deficiency of water and the precariousness of seasons, and to the rates obtaining in other Districts, and especially in those which, with greater natural advantages, have been recently scientifically re-settled, I am of opinion, as to which the Board are already aware, that the present rates of assessment in Cuddapah are, on the whole, unfairly high.

3. I therefore hold that the great bulk of the land-owners are absolutely unable to bear extra taxation in times of famine, and I would here remark, what seems to be so constantly lost sight of, that all distinctions between imperial and local taxation are wholly beyond the comprehension of agricultural populations. What they have to pay they pay to "the Circar," and their minds are impenetrable by any other idea upon the subject.

4. It is impossible to arrive at any conclusive opinion on the subject of the hoarding of grain and money, but my impression has always been that the existence of the practice has been much exaggerated. I know this that I cannot get the reputed wealthiest merchants in the District to admit the possession of incomes of more than a very few thousands of rupees. Almost the leading merchant of Cuddapah has returned his income at Rupees 1,600, and the very highest return received is only Rupees 6,500. I have been making special inquiries,

and although it seems very odd to me, and I am inclined to be sceptical about it, I cannot discover that more than about a dozen men in the whole District are even supposed to have incomes of Rupees 10,000.

5. The idea, therefore, of meeting a local famine by local taxation must be pronounced, as far as Cuddapah is concerned, to be an impracticable one.

No. 261, dated Madanapally, the 9th August 1870.

From—E. Storr, Esq., Acting Sub-Collector.

To—G. VansAgnew, Esq., Collector of Cuddapah.

I have the honor to reply to your foot note No. 265 of 1st August 1870 on Board's Proceedings No. 4921 of 18th July 1870.

2. I beg to state that I differ entirely from the opinions advanced by the Famine Commissioners as to the arrangements to be made on the occasion of a famine occurring in any District.

3. The principle advocated by them appears to be that when the inhabitants of a certain District, or portion of a District, have, through no fault of their own, but through the visitation of Providence, been brought into great distress, further burdens should be at once put upon them by the State.

4. The reason given is that, if the distress is relieved from funds contributed by tax-payers in general, and not by a local tax, there is danger of the dispensers of the relief acting over-liberally, because they only supply a portion of the funds from their own purse.

5. It is admitted that it is a fairer arrangement in the abstract that the empire in general should bear the burden of relieving famine occurring in its various Districts, and surely it would be possible for the Local Administration to determine when the time had come for giving relief and to devise checks against abuse in granting it.

6. Famine occurring in a District affects all classes more or less, primarily the poor of the non-agricultural classes, and I cannot see the justice of throwing upon their richer neighbours the burden of their support. I am quite sure that the imposition of a local cess for relief purposes would at once stop most, if not all, the charities so freely given by Native communities at such seasons.

7. To expect zemindars to support all the poor of their estates in a time when their own resources must necessarily be terribly diminished, appears unreasonable. Their wealth is derived entirely from a share in the produce of the soil, and to impose extra taxes upon them at a time when they are getting no returns whatever from their estates, is a measure, in my opinion, both impolitic and unjust.

8. It is by no means clear to me that this obligation of supporting the poor (which admittedly attached to Government while it was the

great landholder of the country) was transferred to the zemindars. In any case it has been held in abeyance for more than half a century, and I think the zemindars might with justice urge that such extraordinary taxation should be met not out of their own income derived from the land, but from other sources, such as abkarry, stamps, &c., in which they have no share.

9. As regards the sub-division of Cuddapah, I have no hesitation in saying that, in time of famine, it would be impossible to relieve the distress by a local rate. The population consists principally of petty landholders farming their own land, and moderately wealthy farmers are very few in number. There are no manufactures and few rich merchants who would be able to bear the extra tax. It would be an impossibility to tax the ryots who would already have been reduced to borrowing or mortgaging their lands to the Comaties.

No. 111, dated Ootacamund, the 10th August 1870.

From—J. W. Breeks, Esq., Commissioner of the Neilgherries.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to reply to Proceedings of the Board dated 18th July, No. 4921, regarding ways and means for relieving famines.

2. I first take the points to which special attention is directed by the Board.

I.—The tenures and settlement of the District and the rate of taxation.

The land revenue of this District is paid under the three heads of—

(1) ryotwari.
(2) plantation.
(3) quit-rent.

No. 1 appertains to the usual ryotwari tenure as prevailing in the South of India.

The rates of assessment vary from 2 to 10 annas an acre in this District.

Forty-six thousand three hundred and seventy acres are held under this tenure by 2,577 ryots. The revenue is paid in eight instalments in the months of November, December, January, February, March, April, May, and June.

One hundred and ninety-five acres is the largest number in one puttah—the average is 18 acres.

No. 2 consists of land given to Europeans and others for the cultivation of coffee, tea, and such special products. Previous to 1863 grants were made on various terms. In 1863 the waste land rules came into operation, and no land in the District can now be got by European or

Native, except at public auction under the waste land rules, and liable to a fixed annual assessment of Rupee 1 for grass and Rupees 2 for forest. About 10,000 acres have been taken up under the head of plantation.

No. 3 consists of quit-rent on houses and premises within the three settlements of Ootacamund, Coonoor, and Kotergherry.

The population of the District by the last census was 38,142, which makes the land revenue about Rupee 1 a head.

Taxation under the various sources of revenue, *viz.*, land, stamps, abkarry, &c., and including municipal taxes, tolls, and road cess, amounts to about Rupees 5 a head.

In addition something should be added for salt and customs.

3. *II.—The ability of landed-owners to bear extra taxation in times of famine, considering how the land tax is paid.*

The owners of ryotwari land would be quite unable to bear extra taxation in a time of famine. The rates of assessment are no doubt low, but there is no accumulation of wealth amongst the cultivators, who are small holders. If this or any other ryotwari District in the South of India were unfortunately scourged by a famine, so far from being able to bear any extra taxation, the ryot after the famine would be in the condition described by Mr. Girdlestone:

"Cattle, implements, clothes, the very bed on which he sleeps, and the very vessel from which he drinks, are disposed of before he will move from the home of his fathers. And granted that his resources enable him to keep body and soul together till the rain unbinds the soil, he is then utterly without the means of renewing his cultivation. He is involved in every sort of difficulty. The little capital he possessed is gone. He is in debt to every money-lender who would give him credit. He owes more on account of his land than he can hope in a long series of years to re-pay. He must have aid from without, or he is lost."—

(Report on past famines of the North-Western Provinces, paragraph 20, page 11.)

4. *III.—The extent to which grain and money are hoarded in the District.*

Each Badaga village has a range of pits under the street in front on the line of houses for storing grain. Formerly they used to keep grain enough for a couple of years or so, but Mr. Metz and others inform me that now they never keep more than the year's consumption, and in some instances not even that.

The dealers in the town bazaars have no great quantity of grain in store. Weekly markets are well supplied from the low country.

No money is hoarded by the hill tribes; their profits go to increase their herds.

5. This District is but sparsely populated. The only class of any numerical importance are the Badagas, who by last census numbered 17,778. They are all cultivators and independent of the labor market, although of late years they have earned considerable sums in the shape of daily wages on coffee, tea, and cinchona estates, and on public works.

Considering the situation of the District, its elevation and exposure to both monsoons, it seems highly improbable that it will ever be visited by a famine involving the whole population.

These visitations in nine cases out of ten are the effects of long-continued droughts, such as are hardly conceivable in mountainous Districts along the Western Ghâts.

6. The remarks of the Famine Commissioners in paragraphs 63 to 73 of their report are to the following effect:

That in spite of precaution and improvements famines will occur; *that* as society in India advances in the modern sense, land will find its way into the hands of individual proprietors, and the poorer classes will swell the ranks of daily laborers and become less capable of withstanding famine; *that* the disadvantages of a poor law are so great that they would not recommend that resource in ordinary seasons; *that* the voluntary local charity of rural Districts is insufficient to meet heavy calls; *that* it would be too heavy a burden on Government to afford the necessary relief on all occasions; *that*, on the whole, the time has come to relieve the wider poverty of extraordinary occasions by local taxation; *that* only as a last resource, recourse must be had to general taxation and the general charity of the country, because there is a great tendency to be over-charitable with other people's money; *that* town charity will generally suffice for the town population; *that* the obligation of zemindars to support the poor of their estates has always been acknowledged, and is, in fact, one which attached to the Government as the great landholder of the country; *that* local taxation for the poor should, in permanently settled Districts, take the shape of a charge on zemindaree rights to be enforced by law; *that* when the rate assessed exceeds a certain proportion of the rental an assessment on the District should be made, and when the charge on the District exceeds the prescribed maximum, aid should be given from the public exchequer; and *that* the Government should be empowered to advance money to be recovered as land revenue spread over several years.

The Commissioners conclude with the following summary:

Ordinary poverty to be left to private charity.

Extraordinary poverty to be a charge on the land enforced by law.

Extreme famine to be a charge on the general revenues of the country, and on the charity of the general public.

7. The Commissioners seem to me to have mixed up two matters which have not necessarily any connection with each other, *viz.*, (1) the

necessity or otherwise of some sort of law in India to provide for the poor, and (2) the best way of relieving a famine.

8. As far as I know the South of India there seems to me no necessity whatever for poor laws.

As the Commissioners themselves say (paragraph 65)—"Natives recognize the personal obligation of supporting their own poor * * * in a wonderful and admirable manner."

It would be mischievous, indeed, to weaken their sense of this obligation by inaugurating poor laws, in the vain hope that the laws would in some way or other relieve the Government of financial disturbances caused by the occasional recurrence of famines.

A poor law is not only undesirable in ordinary seasons, but it would not be of the least use in a time of famine.

9. In one place the Famine Commissioners declare that the obligation of zemindars in permanently settled Districts with respect to the poor is the same as attached to Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country.

It follows, therefore, that the obligation of zemindars in permanently settled Districts and of Government in ryotwari Districts is one and the same.

In another place the Commissioners propose that local taxation for the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindaree rights to be enforced by law.

In ryotwari Districts, therefore, it must take the shape of a charge on the Government rights in the land.

Local taxation in this form in the South of India would mean State aid.

Nothing would sooner "wither up private charity" in this Presidency than the knowledge that the Government were bound on the appearance of distress to step in and take charge of the poor.

10. "Ordinary poverty" and "extraordinary poverty" (meaning by this term scarcity and distress short of famine), whether of a local or general character, had better, I think, be left to local or general charity as each case might seem to require without the interference of the Legislature.

The Government as the great landholder of the country even in such cases might be called upon to assist under certain circumstances, such as when the local and general charities are plainly insufficient.

But in cases of "famine" the Government in ryotwari Districts are, in my opinion, at once bound (and so is the zemindar in permanently settled Districts) to supply food in return for labor to the able-bodied, and to feed gratuitously the helpless.

11. The question then is, what constitutes a famine?

When distress reaches starvation point, over a wide area or a over small but exceptionally inaccessible area, this is famine.

The exact point of time when distress merits the appellation of famine in any given locality can only be determined by the local officers with reference to the cause of the distress, the nature of the population and of the communications, and the actual price of the people's ordinary food throughout the District.

12. As it is evident that some zemindars will evade this obligation when they can, recourse should be had to the legislature to enable the Government to assess any such zemindar whose territory may be situated within the famine District, in such a sum as would bear the same proportion to the total famine expenditure as his rental bears to the land revenue of the District.

If there be any doubt as to whether or no the distress in the zemindar's territory amounts to famine, the Act might provide for the assembly of a jury to decide that point as suggested in paragraph 70 of the Commissioners' Report.

13. I am aware of the objection to State aid that may be taken on the ground of the general tendency that exists everywhere to be over-charitable with other people's money.

No doubt greater economy will be observed in the administration of relief funds if those who are best able to test the reality of local distress have also to provide the funds out of their own pockets.

It is on this account that each parish in London is made to support its own poor, and the rule is well enough when the difference in the rates of adjoining parishes does not exceed a few pence in the pound.

But now that the East of London pays as many shillings as the West pence, is there not a general feeling growing up that the rule is unfair?

14. Even if it were practicable (which I think not, for reasons given in paragraph 15) to raise sufficient money by local taxes for the relief of famine in a ryotwari District, any system of local taxation which could be devised must result, it seems to me, in the most appalling inequalities between the inhabitants of the Districts locally taxed and those of adjoining Districts not so taxed.

15. Statistics show that a District takes years to recover from famine, and that all sources of revenue fall off. It is likely that this is due not exclusively to the diminution of the population by starvation and emigration, but in part to the impoverishment of those who remain. All, both rich and poor, with the exception perhaps of a few grain-sellers, suffer in some measure. Why then add to the general burden by imposing local taxation?

If famine visited all the country equally, such a measure would be less unfair. But while some Districts are from situation, soil, &c., especially liable to drought, others are almost exempted from such calamities either by natural advantages or extensive irrigation works.

The effect of local taxation would be to weigh heavily the least prosperous parts of the empire.

It seems to me that anything approaching a famine should be viewed as a State enemy. We should not, after a war, go back along the track of an invading army, and levy a local tax on those Districts of ours through which the enemy had passed, in order to support the inhabitants whose lands have been laid waste and villages burnt.

16. If the Government would carry out that excellent suggestion of the Famine Commissioners, and have ready in every District where famine is possible a scheme of special works fit for famine laborers, which could be undertaken at once in sections and without further professional consideration, much of the famine expenditure might be reproductive and useful.

A goodly portion of the funds might possibly be supplied by a general contribution from the public works allotment in well-to-do Districts.

Afterwards the contributions might be capitalised and debited against the suffering Districts whose public works allotments in future years might be somewhat reduced in favor of the contributing Districts.

17. In paragraph 63 the Commissioners seem to give it as their opinion that henceforward famines may be expected as heretofore, and that the result of our administration is to make the poor less capable of withstanding such calamities.

With the extension of railways, roads, and canals and the execution of large irrigation works in different parts of the country, each work being the centre of a circle within which, humanly speaking, famine will be impossible, I think it unlikely that famines will occur either as frequently or as severely as heretofore.

The effect of our administration may be to increase the number of the laboring class who have less means than farmers to stand out against famine. But, on the other hand, all extensions of communication and irrigation render famine less formidable.

Enclosure No. 2.

No. 405, dated Ongole, the 4th August 1870.

From—J. C. Hughesdon, Esq., Officiating Sub-Collector.

To—The Officiating Collector of Nellore.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Board's Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th ultimo, and your memorandum thereon No. 1914, dated 29th idem.

2. The object in view is the relief by special funds, to be raised from landowners by special local taxation, of such extraordinary distress as the resources of private charity are unable to cope with.

3. Let us suppose the actual existence of some such system of raising funds, and its application to the Nellore District.

4. The ryotwari revenue of Nellore may for our present purpose be placed at 15 lakhs, and the (peishcush) quit-rent of zemindaries at 4 lakhs. The incomes of the zemindaries may be estimated at 6 lakhs after the deduction of their peishcush.

5. In consequence of a famine, an expenditure of Rupees 70,000 has been necessitated. This sum will probably have been spent somewhat in the following manner: for the relief of the sick, the aged, and the children, Rupees 10,000; for the purpose of providing employment for the able-bodied, Rupees 60,000. The works executed at this crisis might in ordinary times, perhaps, have cost Rupees 20,000. In consequence partly of the dearness of provisions, partly of other circumstances, under which the labor is employed, its cost is increased three-fold.* Of the Rupees 60,000, Rupees 40,000, therefore, must be put down to the famine. Add to this the expenditure on the sick, &c., and we have the disbursement on account of the famine at Rupees 50,000.

6. This sum, *ex-hypothesei*, is to be paid by those deriving a revenue from land. Government pays on 19 lakhs; the zemindars on 6 lakhs. A tax of 2 per cent. on the zemindars, and a proportionate contribution by the Government, will give the required amount.

7. But there are other classes deriving a revenue from land, and who ought to contribute, *1st*, Shotriyamdars, Inamdars, &c.; *2nd*, farmers of rents from zemindars.

8. For the sake of simplicity, and because I have no means at hand of estimating even roughly the profits of these two classes as they exist in this District, I leave them out of the account. Any payments

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* This may seem to be an excessive estimate. I doubt whether it is so. One would naturally expect, and my own experience (which, however, is very slight) leads to the conclusion that famine work funds cannot be administered economically, and that usually the expenditure (regard being had to ultimate results) is most extravagant. Famine works should, if possible, be such as would properly in any case be an imperial charge (or a charge upon the local cess fund), and the *normal* cost, as estimated by the Department of Public Works, should be met from the Imperial exchequer (or the local cesses), the excess only going against famine funds. If private works were at the request of private parties undertaken, the cost should be recovered on an estimate prepared by arbitrators. Here I think the greatest difference would appear. Famine works may not cost three times the average price paid by Government, but they probably cost thrice the amount private individuals would disburse. In this view I am confirmed by the following passage in the *Memorandum of the Madras Famine* (page 48): "It was estimated that the whole of the work performed on this occasion (Bellary Famine, 1854) cost about three times what it could have been executed for in the ordinary manner, so that about two-thirds of the outlay incurred, should be debited to charity." This statement is in singular accord with my own view of the subject founded on other data. I do not think that Government is bound to find employment without debiting the extra cost to famine funds.

by them would, of course, reduce the percentage demand on Government and the zemindars.

9. The intermediate landlords should be taxable on the difference between the annual payments made *to* them by their under-tenants and those made *by* them to the superior landlord. Thus zemindars would be assessed at the difference between their receipts and their peishcush, and farmers under the zemindars on the same principle. The actual cultivators of the land (though for the most part really co-proprietors with the superior landlords) would escape payment; and this (with reference to existing circumstances in these parts, *viz.*, the general poverty of the agricultural class, the scale of their profits, the size of their holdings) seems to be proper. In fact, some of the members of this class would require relief.

10. The extraordinary demand on land-owners should not exceed a certain percentage, say 5 per cent., in any one year. Beyond this, the magnitude of the calamity would properly render it a national concern, and any deficiency in the funds should be met from the general resources of the country.

11. The expenses to be borne by special taxation should not begin to be incurred antecedently to a notification in the official Gazette, declaring the intention of Government to place a certain area under the operation of the Famine Act. It would probably be convenient to provide in the Act that the several Districts, should for the purposes of the Act, be taken as circles of taxation.

12. All funds would have to be advanced, in the first instance, from the Imperial Treasury. The need would be too urgent, and time too valuable for resort to be had, in the first instance, to taxation. In fact, it would probably be the simplest way to postpone all recovery of moneys till an approximate estimate of future as well as past expenditure could be framed.

13. The funds would be administered by local committees appointed by the Collector, and selected, as far as possible, from among the persons upon whom the payments would ultimately fall. Election by rate-payers would be too cumbrous a machinery to be resorted to on such an occasion. Besides, Government being the largest land-owner, its officers should, of course, have a preponderant interest in the management.

14. The area of relief would frequently include municipalities. Municipal funds ought, therefore, to be laid under contribution. Either a percentage charge on the municipal income might be made, or the amount to be paid by the municipality might be fixed with reference to its population as compared with that of the entire taxation-circle.

15. However crude the above suggestions may be considered (and they have no pretensions to completeness), I submit that an enactment on some such basis would have the following advantages :

(1.) It would afford a complete scheme for the relief of urgent local distress by local taxation. Although not exclusively aimed at the zemindars, it would effectively reach them, and while thus achieving its principal object, it would not savour of class-legislation.

(2.) Ordinary poverty, and such extraordinary want as was of very partial extent, would be left to the resources of private charity.

(3.) Extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes, whether rural or urban, who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the owners of land and the well-to-do dwellers in towns.

(4.) In cases of the most extreme famine, affecting the majority of the people, local resources would be supplemented by grants from the general revenues of the country.

16. With regard to the ability of the zemindars in these parts to bear the impost that would be thrown upon them, I entertain no doubt. My impression is, that their annual incomes may be taken at present to exceed their peishcush in the proportion of 5 or 6 to 4, and while their incomes surely, though slowly, increase, their peishcush is fixed. It is to be borne in mind that, though the cultivator may have certainly of tenure at a limited rent, and that in this direction the zemindar's income may remain unaltered,* yet the latter has a right to rent from waste land newly taken up for cultivation, and in respect of it may dictate his own terms; and this applies also to old holdings vacated from time to time, and newly occupied. On the other hand, the zemindar is not compelled to spend anything on improvements, and as a rule he spends very little. Too frequently he argues in this way : " The tank is breached and, to be sure, there can be no wet cultivation under it next year, but what is that to me? There is no custom for me to give, and I cannot be compelled to give remission. The ryots may put down dry crops if they like, or let the land alone." Or, perhaps, it is possible at a small expense to enlarge the capacity of a tank and to get two crops from the land under it, instead of one ; but the work is not done because there is no custom for the ryots to make an extra payment for a second crop, probably they would not make it, and could not be compelled to make it. Little or nothing, therefore, being spent on improvements, and the care of the zemindar being confined to the collection of his rents, which is conducted by a wretchedly underpaid establishment, the members of which are left to eke out their subsistence by cultivation and gifts from the tenants, the cost of managing the zeminadry is to the proprietors very small. Their net income is but little lower than their gross revenue (less peishcush of course), and they have large sums hoarded up both in cash and jewels.

* Where, however, as in some cases, the rent is payable in grain, the zemindar of course shares in the increasing prosperity of the ryots.

17. As to the class of Shrotriyamdars, Inamdars, &c., embracing as it does people in a variety of conditions, it is impossible to furnish

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any general information. In cases of extreme hardship, if such were found to exist, the demand upon these petty landlords might be foregone without palpable injustice to other classes of the community. At the same time it is to be observed that these proprietors, more than any others, perhaps, evade their obligations. The great zemindars are in a measure amenable to public opinion, and some of them have in the time of need displayed "the greatest liberality"—(*Memorandum on the Madras Famine*, page 114). The very insignificance of the smaller landlords keeps them out of the reach of like influences.

18. That in very many cases a demand may, upon special as well as general grounds, be made upon the landed classes, is clear from the report of the Collector of Ganjam, which appears in the *memorandum* above referred to (page 110). Mr. Forbes, in speaking of the famine of 1866, describes the "misery and mortality" on private estates as having been "far greater than in Government talooks."

19. The question suggests itself—how far such a measure as I have sketched out would be a relief to the imperial funds? Here again I would refer to Mr. Dalyell's *memorandum*; at page 54 of the *memorandum* the cultivated area of the Presidency is estimated at 28 millions of acres, distributed under the following heads :

	Millions.
Ryotwary	18¼
Zemindary	5½
Inams	4¼
...	28

It thus appears that private proprietors hold about one-third of the cultivation of the Presidency. But Government, as ultimate landlord of these holdings, would have to pay in respect of them a sum which may be taken to be equal to the payments due from the individual proprietors. It seems, therefore, that the pressure upon the public resources in times of severe famine might be reduced by one-fourth, the burden to that extent being properly and fairly chargeable to the land-owners. But the saving in the public expenditure must not be taken as the sole measure of the advantage of the proposed scheme. Government would no longer pay, simply because there was no one else to look to. The public contribution would now be made by the State in its capacity of, and with reference to its obligations, as landed proprietor. The aid given by the Imperial Treasury would be in complete accordance with the principles of local taxation.

No. 291, dated the 3rd October 1870.

From—The Hon'ble D. Arbuthnott, Collector of Madura.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of the Government Proceedings dated 29th June 1870, No. 966, and, in obedience to the orders of the Board, dated 18th July 1870, No. 4921, I proceed to make my remarks on the points to which my attention has been especially called.

2. The only novelty in the plan proposed by the Commissioners appears to be the introduction in seasons of great scarcity of a tax to be imposed on zemindars for the support of the poor in their estates. In Northern India, where a large portion of the land is permanently assessed at a rate far below its real value, such a scheme may be desirable, but in this District the large land-holders pay large sum annually to Government as peishcush, and are besides in most cases hopelessly in debt. I fear, therefore, that such a scheme for raising money in times of famine is utterly impracticable. In the zemindaries of Ramnad and Shevaganga, in cases of famine the zemindars are compelled to share the poverty of their ryots, for under the varem* system they are paid in kind, and their incomes are, therefore, entirely dependent on the quantity of grain grown on their estates; and if the crops fail, the zemindars are in some measure in a worse plight than their tenants, for the former must under all circumstances pay their peishcush to Government, while the latter pay nothing to the zemindars. I have no reason to believe that either grain or money is hoarded to any great extent. There is a general tendency among the people, in prosperous seasons, to invest their savings in jewels, and as these ornaments are bought for nearly their intrinsic value, and are easily convertible into money, they form a useful provision to assist the people in adverse seasons.

* A division of the crop between landlord and tenant.

3. If it were feasible, it would be far more reasonable to tax landholders more heavily in favorable seasons, to form a fund to meet the exigencies of future famines, than to levy extra taxes during famine time when their source of income is materially diminished.

No. 4421, dated Masulipatam, the 7th October 1870.

From—J. A. C. Boswell, Esq., Offg. Collector of the Kistna District.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to reply to the Board's Proceedings dated 18th July 1870, No. 4921, calling on Collectors for their opinions as to a

proposal for raising funds by special local taxation on the occurrence of famine.

2. There has been so much new taxation of late, and the increasing burdens fall so heavily on the people, that there is a grievous feeling of discontent and dissatisfaction abroad. Let us know once for all is their cry what we are called on to pay, and let us be asked to pay in a round sum, but fresh demands every day in new forms, and some of these forms hitherto unheard of, while the air is thick with rumours of still new taxes coming, the people are thoroughly harrassed and bewildered. The present rate of the income tax is felt as a crushing burden on the poorer classes. The District Road Cess is not yet appreciated, because the benefits it confers are prospective, and much money will have to be laid out before more than a few of the main lines in each District can be undertaken. The price of salt has been considerably raised, and so has the seigniorage on fire-wood. Municipal taxation meets with much opposition, and the prospect of the local fund taxes looming in the future is a very dark cloud in the horizon.

3. I would represent that the condition of the Madras Presidency is such as to render it impossible to lay the burden of relieving the sufferers in a time of famine or scarcity on the agricultural classes. The ryots of the Madras Presidency are tenants and not landlords, pauper tenants, too, by a very large majority, men who live from hand to mouth, and who, after paying the amount of the rent to Government, have left little beyond a bare subsistence. When for a single season the rains fail, the only way in which the people can be brought through the time of trial is by large remissions of revenue on the part of Government.

4. The ryots are naturally improvident and look to Government to do all for them. Let the evil be aggravated and a scarcity become a famine our ryots are driven to the greatest straits and are unable to support themselves, much less to bear an extra strain of taxation for the relief of their neighbours; still there is no doubt that among the Hindus there prevails an admirable system of charity: families supporting their poorer relatives, wealthy members of each caste affording aid to the poorer members, and also to some extent a practice for the employés of labor affording relief to their laborers to tide over hard times. It is the existence of this admirable custom, based upon religious duty, caste-feeling, the ties of family affection, and self-interest all combined, that obviates the necessity in India for poor laws and poor-houses; and I am sure that we must all deprecate any innovation that would tend to subvert the existing state of things, and this is just what local taxation for the relief of special local distress would most effectually do. It would dry up the natural springs of charity, wean the people from their admirable custom of looking after their own poor, and entail a most heavy burden upon the State hereafter. The fact is, that no race are so ready to admit

the claims of charity as the Hindus; but let Government once begin to impose taxes for the express purpose of relieving distress, the people will at once consider that, having paid their tax, their responsibility ceases, and no more need be expected from them; and once let this feeling gain ground, the people will find it hard in ordinary times to return again to their former habits of open-handed liberality.

5. What I would respectfully submit as a far preferable course is that in case of famines an appeal be made to the public by the authorities: let a true statement of facts be officially put forth, let relief committees be formed and the services of the best agency on the spot be secured to afford the public a guarantee that their contributions will be judiciously and advantageously expended and not squandered. As an encouragement to the people to subscribe liberally, let Government guarantee a grant-in-aid from imperial funds equal to whatever amount is raised by public subscription; and that no ill efforts may result from delay, the authorities on the spot, whenever distress assumes alarming proportions, should be authorized to incur expenditure promptly in affording necessary relief, the same being entered in the accounts as advances recoverable to be subsequently adjusted.

6. With regard to special famine public works, it is the general belief that upon such works much public money is often wasted. The works are hastily selected, carelessly superintended, and badly laid out. The first object in the crisis of a famine is to find work of any kind to give remunerative employment to the starving masses, and in what is often their weak enfeebled condition, it is found in many cases impracticable to enforce a good day's labor for a full day's pay. Much of this might be obviated by having works previously selected in every District irrigation works and roads, which it is intended in the ordinary course of things to take up as funds are available. For these works estimates might be prepared, and in readiness, so that in the case of an emergency arising a large number of coolies might be at once employed in an advantageous manner. As to providing funds for increased expenditure on public works, the expenditure upon works of irrigation should be provided from imperial funds, the expenditure on District roads from local funds; and if the resources of the latter be found inadequate to meet the sudden expansion of works, let the District Road Fund be supplied with advances from the imperial exchequer, to be repaid when times improve. This, I would submit, would be both more politic and more popular than any scheme that could be devised for local taxation for the relief of local distress.

7. Totally opposed as I am to such a scheme, I will now, however, proceed to give such information as has been called for in regard to the special circumstances of this part of the country. The cultivating classes are as a rule improvident, and prove unable to bear themselves

the strain of any long-continued agricultural distress. The burden of famine taxation must, therefore, necessarily fall on the zemindars, only a few of whom exist in this Presidency, and upon the trading classes, whose profits do not suffer in times of famine so much as others, as they are able to protect themselves by raising prices and storing grain to meet the chance of a rise. The thrifty Komaties, Chetties, dealers, merchants, and money-lenders of the country are really that portion of the population that are best of. A large proportion of the ryots cultivate upon advances made by the trading class, and, paying heavy interest, are thus in the hands of their creditors to whom the crops are mortgaged, and who are able to carry off the ryots' labor of the year at a favorable valuation. If there are to be famine taxes, the burden must fall chiefly on zemindars and large landed proprietors, ryots whose rent paid to Government is above a certain amount, and the trading classes. To these may be added public servants, whose incomes are unchanged, though their actual value is decreased when prices and wages rise.

8. The Kistna District contains 2,140 villages, of which the Government seri are 1,341, zemindary 576, mokhasas and agranarams 223.

All the Government villages and most of the zemindary villages are under ryotwary tenure. The *Asara* or sharing system, as well as joint and whole rents of villages, also exist in zemindari and mokhasa or inam villages. In the *Asara* tenure the division of produce is made at different rates. In some places the landlord gets nine-tenths, and the tenant eleven-tenths, and *vice versâ* in other places; elsewhere, again, each party takes a moiety when villages are settled by joint or whole rents; the rates of assessment are constantly fluctuating, but they are generally lower than the ryotwary rates both in Government and zemindary villages.

9. In the Masulipatam portion the new settlement has been introduced, and in the Guntoor portion it is about to be introduced. The new rates having been fixed after long and deliberate consideration any additional tax would be felt as a burden upon the lands, the value of which being also reduced very much in times of dearth and famine, the land-holders would be compelled to throw them up; and the fact that they could take them up again when the prospects of the season improved would make them careless about relinquishments.

10. The inamdars are already complaining that their free tenures are burdened with quit-rents and road cess. A famine tax would be felt in many cases as the last straw on the camel's back.

11. In regard to zemindary lands, the ryots are already paying higher rates than those paid by Government ryots in the neighbourhood; and as no remissions are ever granted to them, additional taxation in a time of scarcity would be a most intolerable burden.

12. Under these circumstances sufficient funds could not be raised from land alone, neither could this source be entirely dispensed with, being the most important source of income in India.

13. It is true that, as compared with other Districts of this Presidency, the great irrigation works in the Kistna of late years have done much to increase the prosperity of the people, and the demand for cotton has developed a large trade in the Guntoor or western part of the District. The results of this may be seen in the ryots building tiled houses instead of thatched huts; in the increased extent of land taken up year by year; in the improved diet of the people; the very general substitution of rice for cholum (Sorghamvulgou) in late years. Ryots also have more cattle, dress better, and show generally by outward appearance that their circumstances are improving. In the zemindaries, however, this improvement is not visible. With or without cause the zemindary ryots are afraid to betray the signs of increasing prosperity for fear lest their landlord should come down upon them and deprive them of their gains. Thus it is believed that hoarding and burying money prevail to a much larger extent in zemindary than in Government villages.

14. Grain is never kept for more than two years. It is estimated that the stock hoarded might be sufficient for two years' consumption. To what extent money is hoarded it is impossible to say; but where there are no banks the surplus profits of labor usually take the form of family ornaments, or the owners lend out money in a quiet way at high interest, and it is chiefly when afraid to show his wealth that he is led to burying his produce in his grain-pit, or the wall of his house.

15. While speaking of the general increased prosperity of Government ryots in this District, it is necessary to mention that in part of the Masulipatam portion where low joint rents hitherto prevailed, the introduction of the new settlement rates has pressed somewhat heavily on the people. The rates were gradually enhanced year by year, but even with this precaution the arrears have been hard to get in; and as prices fall, as they are beginning to do, there may be still further agricultural depression in such localities.

16. I beg to annex a list of zemindary and proprietary estates in this District, showing the amount of peishcush and water-rate payable to Government, and the probable gross outturn of each estate.

		Names of Estates.	Number of villages comprised therein.	Amount of peishcush and water-rate.			Probable gross outturn.		
				Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Ancient Zemindaries.	1.	Nuzivid	295	1,16,621	11	9	2,95,716	0	0
	2.	Chevendra	7	5,569	13	5	19,338	0	0
	3.	Devarakota	67	1,12,954	2	7	1,85,384	0	0
	4.	Chintalapad	23	17,500	0	0	36,060	0	0
	5.	Mailavaram, one-fourth share	19	4,858	12	0	14,145	0	0
	6.	,, one share ...	14	3,887	0	0	11,054	0	0
	7.	Munagal	37	4,455	0	0	27,135	0	0
	8.	Tirvur, half Vantu ...	8	2,177	0	0	6,658	0	0
	9.	Vutkur	7	2,156	0	0	6,345	0	0
	10.	Gampalagudem, East Vantu	7	1,295	0	0	7,300	0	0
	11.	,, West ,, ...	7	1,291	8	0	7,300	0	0
	12.	Inagadapa	7	1,221	8	0	3,224	0	0
	13.	Komire	6	703	8	0	1,654	0	0
	14.	Lingagiri	6	486	8	0	1,089	0	0
	15.	Kuchipudi	1	229	4	0	500	0	0
Proprietary Estates.	1.	Vallur, including Gudur, &c.	38	60,972	3	6	80,063	0	0
	2.	Kruttivennu	9	2,910	0	0	6,419	0	0
	3.	Tirvur Gadicherlavar ...	8	2,219	0	0	7,300	0	0
	4.	Pengolanu	1	1,262	0	0	2,762	0	0
	5.	Rayaveram	1	933	10	1	3,000	0	0
	6.	Vissannapeta	14	4,886	0	0	24,053	0	0
	7.	Kalagara	1	812	4	0	2,716	0	0
	8.	Chiti Gudur	1	524	0	0	1,234	0	0
	9.	Putreta	1	510	4	0	973	0	0
	10.	Kondur Kambhampad ...	2	507	0	0	1,378	0	0
	11.	Devarapalli	1	461	0	0	663	0	0
	12.	Balliparru	1	459	0	0	715	0	0
	13.	Chinna Gollapalem ...	1	238	0	0	540	0	0
	14.	Narsayagudem ...	1	138	11	5	1,363	0	0
	15.	Kokilampad	1	75	0	0	333	0	0
	16.	Munukulla	1	71	0	0	274	0	0

By the term of their permanent sanad, zemindars in the Madras Presidency are under no obligation to support the poor of their estates; but the obligation attaching to Government as the great landlord having been transferred to some extent to the zemindar, he might be legally required to take sufficient steps, according to his means in time

of dearth, to aid his dependants to tide over a bad season, giving food in return for labor, and also by feeding gratuitously those who are unable to work on his estate. This might be the least objectionable form for adoption in regard to a famine tax; but I think it would in every way be more desirable to stimulate the charitable feelings of the wealthy classes, and for Government to supplement these funds by grants-in-aid from imperial funds, and not to resort to special taxation for such a purpose.

17. The largest zemindaries in the District are Nuzivid, Devarakota, Chintalapad, Mailavaram, Munagal, and Vallur. With the exception of the zemindar of Chintalapad, whose estate was given back to him in the year 1861 after it had been in the hands of Government for a long time, the other zemindars are fairly well to do, and might be able to support their ryots and other dependants in their villages for one or two bad seasons. Their present income is, as shown in the above statement, a good deal more than was calculated at the time of the permanent settlement, the chief cause of which is the increase of cultivation in late years owing to high prices as well as the increase of population. The Vallur Zemindar's gross income from land appears to be comparatively less than that of other estates, but he has other sources of income from contracts, trade, &c., nearly equal to his land revenue. The other zemindars and proprietors in this District are possessed of comparatively smaller means; but if each in proportion to the size of his estate would agree to come forward to support the dwellers in his villages in a time of agricultural distress, this is what they might fairly do. Enjoying as they do the landlord's share of profits out of their land, Government have some claim upon them, and may with reason require them to fulfil their duties in this respect, enforcing the obligation by legal sanctions; but this should be a *dernier* resort, for once recognize the principle of compulsory support and the springs of charity will be seriously imperilled.

No. 457, dated Sydapet, the 26th October 1870.

From—W. T. Blair, Esq., Acting Collector of Chingleput.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to reply to the Proceedings of the Board dated 18th July 1870, No. 4921.

2. The subject referred to in the letter from the Secretary to the Government of India in the Home Department is, whether in times of scarcity funds should be raised by local taxation for the relief of the sufferers before, as a last resource, resort is had to general taxation and the general charity of the country.

3. On referring to the extract from the report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, which is printed with the Board's Proceedings under reply, I

observe that the Commissioners do not intend their proposals to apply to towns, except in certain exceptional cases. With regard to rural Districts they contemplate the imposition of a local tax on the richer persons of each neighbourhood in those parts of the country where the Government receives its revenue direct from the cultivators, and they recommend that in permanently settled Provinces local taxation should take the shape of a charge on zemindary rights to be enforced by law on the ground that in such Provinces the obligation of supporting the poor devolves on the zemindars.

4. The first suggestion of the Commissioners is mainly based on the supposition that the advance in civilization and wealth which has taken place of late years has had the effect of loosening the ties of inter-dependence between landlords and their tenants, of reducing the poorer classes to the condition of mere day-laborers, and of thereby rendering them less capable of withstanding the calamities of famine. However true these observations may be with regard to other parts of India, they are not applicable to the agricultural laborers of this District, or of the other Districts with which I am personally acquainted. The desire to attach laborers permanently to the soil, and to protect agricultural interests from the evils resulting from the desertion of laborers from various causes, is still very strong, and every landlord maintains his servants from year to year. He generally assists them with advances in grain or money, and makes his own arrangements for repayment during a series of years. In fact, most of the agricultural class are either farmers themselves or dependent on farmers, so that in this part of the country I do not think that the abolition of serfdom and slavery has weakened the interest which landlords feel in the condition of their laborers, or has materially favored the growth of a class who subsist on daily wages.

5. The number of rich persons in India, who in a time of scarcity do not assist the poor to the extent of their means, is very small. Such men would be legitimate objects of taxation, but it would be impossible to restrict to them the operation of such a tax as the Commissioners recommend. It would fall alike on all: on the few who had withheld assistance from their starving fellow creatures when able to afford it, and on the vast majority who had done all in their power to alleviate the distress around them; it would repress private charity, which would almost entirely cease on the introduction of a system of compulsory relief, and the result would be that we should lose much more than we should gain.

6. With reference to the other suggestion of the Commissioners regarding a tax on zemindars, I beg to state that there is nothing in the sanad granted to them which imposes on them the obligation of supporting the poor on their estates. At the same time there is nothing in the sanad to preclude the legislature from taxing them for this purpose.

7. The Commissioners' argument, however, that zemindars stand in the position of Government towards their ryots, does not appear to me to be entitled to much weight. The zemindar pays his revenue to the State and all taxes just as any ryot does, and I am unable to see what difference there is between him and a rich ryot. Besides, in this Presidency, at the time of the permanent settlement, we so assessed the zemindars as to leave them very little room for profit, and this in a great measure accounts for the sale of so many zemindaries for arrears of revenue, and for most of the existing zemindars being so poor.

No. 3145, dated the 22nd November 1870.

Endorsed by the Collector of Nellore.

SUBMITTED to the Board in continuation of the reply dated 28th September, No. 2643, from this Office to the Proceedings of the Board dated 18th July last, No. 4921.

No. 402, dated Alur, the 14th November 1870.

From—J. H. MASTER, ESQ., Acting Collector of Bellary.

To—J. GROSE, ESQ., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I HAVE the honor to reply to the Board's Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July last, on the subject of raising, by a system of local taxation, funds required to afford relief to sufferers in the time of famine.

2. The Commissioners, an extract of whose report is contained in the above Proceedings, dwell upon the obligations of zemindars or large land-holders. They recommend that on the occurrence of scarcity of such degree that the population are unable to support themselves, the *zemindars* shall be bound to support the poor of their estates by supplying food in return for labor, failing which the estate is to be assessed.

3. It is to be observed that they profess themselves unable to make any proposition as regards Provinces in which the Government receives its revenue indirect from the cultivators. This District, as the Board are aware, is held entirely on ryotwary tenure. We have no zemindars or large land-holders. The rates of assessment on dry land vary from two annas to three rupees per acre, the difference in the rates up to one rupee being one anna, up to two rupees two annas, and up to three rupees four annas, while the rates of assessment on irrigated land range from one rupee to twelve, with a difference of four annas between each rate, until the assessment reaches ten rupees, after which it is eight annas

4. That the ryots as a body are indigent may be assumed from the fact of more than half of the assessed land in the District being left

waste: they are either too poor to take it up, or they do not make the cultivators pay.

5. The relinquishment of land to the extent of some 200,000 acres during the past Fusli, the continued sale of land for arrears of revenue, and the frequent sales of enfranchised inams for arrears of quit-rent, when they are generally bought in by Government at a nominal figure, are further proofs of the poverty of the land-holders.

6. Considering, therefore, how the land tax is paid, I do not think that the land-holders would bear extra taxation in the time of famine.

7. The divisional officers are unanimous in their opinion that grain is not hoarded in the District, and certainly the facts above-mentioned would negative the supposition that either money or grain is hoarded.

8. I do not see how the proposition to make extraordinary poverty among the rural population a charge on the land can be considered applicable to this part of the country, and when the Commissioners do not advocate the establishment of a poor law in ordinary seasons, how much more impossible would it be to enforce one at a time of universal distress.

9. I beg to forward the replies of the divisional officers on the subject. The Deputy Collector, Vencatachellum Puntalu, in expressing his view has recommended certain schemes which were relief to the exchequer in the way of the formation of funds to be available in times of distress; the object might be adopted with advantage.

No. 231, dated Penkondah, the 8th August 1870.

From—E. TURNER, ESQ., Acting Head Assistant Collector.

To—J. H. MASTER, ESQ., Acting Collector of Bellary.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Board's Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July last, forwarded to me with your foot note for expression of my views on the subject thereof.

2. I will first touch upon the three points to which attention is specially drawn:

1st.—In this District the ryotwary tenure prevails. The annual assessment is fixed at the varying rates of 2 annas to Rupees 12 per acre, according to the nature of the soil, application of water, &c.

2nd.—In time of famine I think the landed-owners would be unable to bear extra taxation.

3rd.—I do not think the agricultural class hoard up more grain than will suffice for one year's supply. In most cases I believe the grain is sold at once to the Comaties.

3. The gist of the whole report is, I think, contained in paragraph 72 of the Commissioners' report. In the second sentence of this paragraph it is stated that "extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population, who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the land enforced by law." On what land? Many of the so-called landed-owners would be enable to pay the ordinary assessment of their lands, and many more would be enable to pay any additional amount.

4. I am of opinion that this is a very inopportune time to think of introducing any new local tax; but if it must be introduced, it appears to me it might be embodied among the provisions of the new Local Funds Bill. If it is intended, as would appear, to make this tax a yearly cess on the land on the principle of the road cess, I am of opinion that it will be very impolitic. These cesses are only another name for increased land assessment, and this constant increase tends to create insecurity. We have already gone quite far enough in this direction consistent with sound policy.

No. 194, dated Huvinhadgali, the 3rd September 1870.

From—V. VENCATACHELLUM, Deputy Collector.

To—J. H. MASTER, ESQ., Acting Collector of Bellary.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your memorandum of the 3rd ultimo, sending the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue of 18th July last, which required the opinion of the revenue officers on certain suggestions made by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into famine in Bengal and Orissa for raising, by a system of local taxation, funds required on such occasions to afford relief to sufferers.

2. I respectfully beg leave to submit my humble opinion upon the subject as required by you.

3. The Commissioners propose—

1st, to tax richer persons in the neighbourhood of the place where distress prevails;

2nd, to require the zemindars in permanently settled Districts to support the poor of their estates by supplying food in return for labor to the able-bodied who are unable to obtain employment, and by feeding gratuitously the helpless unable to labor.

4. The Famine Commissioners affirm that zemindars holding sanads of permanent settlement are under obligation to support the poor of the estates.

5. The obligations of the zemindars are daily increasing.

6. The Sanitary Commissioner recommends that land-owners should be obliged to provide good wholesome water-supply to their villages, and to attend to other matters of sanitary importance.

Supplement to the *India Gazette* of July 16th, 1870.
Sanitary Commissioner's letter to India Government, dated 28th May 1870, paragraph 32.

7. If the zemindars can justly be made to support the poor of their estates, there is no necessity for any other taxation as regards other villages or talooks which are under the immediate management of Government; for the Government, who have the management of all* the sources of income, cannot divest themselves of the duty of supporting the poor of the estates under their management, while they have compelled the zemindars, who have only the management of malguzary lands, to do so.

* Salt, saltpetre, sayer, or duties by land and sea; abkarry tax on intoxicating drugs; taxes personal and professional, markets, fairs or bazaars.
Lakhiraj lands, Section 4, Regulation XXV. of 1802.

8. The proposition to tax the rich persons in the neighbourhood where distress prevails does not commend itself, but it will offend the feelings of benevolent persons and put a stop to Native charities.

9. It is ordained in Vedas that a Hindu should not refuse shelter to any person that comes to his house, and should give him food. The same is repeated by Anam and Pooranas. It is also explained there that a house-holder who refuses to give food to a traveller that comes in quest of it would forfeit all his virtue.

10. It is especially ordained that food should be given in charity in the time of scarcity and famine.

11. By these rules, and by the custom of his ancestors, a true Hindu of sufficient means need not be told of the necessity of his giving food to poor; but if a few rupees are collected from him as a tax for the purpose of giving food to poor people, it will put a stop to his charitable disposition.

12. The numerous choultries and other charitable works constructed by Natives according to the dictates of their religion, prove the fact that charity expands well if left to their choice.

13. It is a well known fact that there are in existence to this date several Chutterums built by Hindus in which food is daily given to the travellers without exacting any work from such travellers, as giving food in return to the work done by a man is not recognized as a charity by Hindu law, but as a hire paid for the work.

14. The Commissioners divide the distress in three classes—

1. Ordinary poverty. — to be left to private charity;
2. Extraordinary poverty. — to be met by a charge on the land enforced by law;

3. Famine. to be met by the general revenue of the country and by appeal to general public.

15. To find out the stage at which a distress may have arrived, we should have an average rate of prices.

16. For the Bellary District the average* of price of second sort paddy is as follows:

* See Land Revenue Settlement Report of the Madras Presidency for Fusli 1277.

Seers per Rupee.			Price per Garce.
53,	average of five years from	Fusli 1261 to 1265 ...	90
38,	,, ,, ,,	Fusli 1266 to 1270 ...	125
24,	,, ,, ,,	Fusli 1271 to 1275 ...	198
15,	Fusli 1276 ...	... ...	315
25,	,, 1277 ...	... ...	193
22,	existing price in this talook.		

17. It will be perceived that the existing prices are at high rate, which would have been deemed extraordinary poverty or famine rate in former times, and that the cultivators and coolies alike endure it at the present time, because the former get high price for their grain, and the latter high rates of wages for their labor.

18. Now there has been a change in the mode of life of the ryots. In former times ryots were not fond of show for fear of extortion and robbery, and used to store if they had money. The wealthy ryots of the present day build comfortable houses, dress decently, adorn their children with ornaments, and eat luxuriantly.

19. With reference to outward appearance, the authorities consider that the ryots are wealthier than what they really are. As the revenue is being collected without much trouble on account of the high prices of grain, it is a general belief that the ryots are able to bear further taxation; but the fact that they cannot bear further taxation is apparent from the frequent occurrence of the necessity of taking measures for the support of poor ryots and people when a single monsoon fails.

20. The reason of this is, formerly large quantities of grain, being surplus after local consumption out of the produce of each talook, would be retained within the talook, as there had been no speedy means of conveying the same to distant places where there is demand for it. Now-a-days vessels, steamers, and railways help the wealthy ryots to send their grain to whatever place they choose, and thus all surplus, after family consumption, being conveyed off for high prices, and each village deprived of its store of grain, the people have no means of support if a single monsoon fails.

21. The fact that the ryots of a ryotwary settlement District are not able to support themselves if a single monsoon fails will be apparent from the information given at page 335 of 10th June 1870 regarding the famine of 1869 in the North-West Provinces.

The Indian Economist, 10th June 1870, page 335.

22. Further, the ryots devote part of their fields which were formerly cultivated with grain to other produce, such as cotton, indigo, and sugar-cane. These crops are beneficial to the ryots on account of the profits they get by them, but the quantity of grain is less than before to each ryot.

23. Although the accounts may show an increase in the cultivation in grain, it is attributable to the fact that persons of cooly class of former days have become now cultivators, whereby the number of ryots and the extent of cultivation swell.

24. Even at the present time when it is believed that the ryots are in a state of affluence, our District Gazette shows the numerous ryots who have not paid their rent and whose fields are being sold. This plainly shows that the existing rate of assessment in this District, which is a ryotwary District, is not so light that the land-owners can bear any extra taxation, especially in times of famine.

25. Of late some of the existing sources of revenue have been increased, and additional taxes have been imposed. In considering the taxes which touch population in general, salt tax alone only is deemed as affecting every poor man, but there is another indirect necessary of life of every man, *viz.*, fire-wood, the value of which has risen to twice or thrice of its former value on account of the seigniorage imposed on fire-wood cut in the jungle. This, like the increase in the price of salt, has been pressing heavily on the poor, most of whom have to purchase the article, and causing additional expense to others.

26. The following are the answers I submit on the points referred to by the Board of Revenue :

1. The tenures and settlement of the District and the rate of taxation.

The whole District of Bellary is under ryotwar tenure.

The rate of taxation is thus : dry land from 2 annas to Rupees 3 per acre ; wet land from Rupee 1 to Rupees 12 per acre.

2. The ability of landed-owners to bear extra taxation in times of famine, considering how the land tax is paid.

The ryots are not able to bear further taxation in times of famine.

3. The extent to which grain and money are hoarded in the District.

There is no grain stored in the District to any great extent.

Few wealthy ryots keep grain which may be sufficient for them for one or two years, and dispose of the rest as they get good price. No reliable information can be given regarding money.

27. Having submitted my opinion on the propositions of the Commissioners and the information required by the Board, I now respectfully beg leave to lay before you my humble opinion as to the proper way to meet famines.

28. It is becoming the dignity of a benevolent and powerful Government like the British one in India to have a charity department. If the Government be pleased to create such a department under the management of an officer called Charity Commissioner* to receive the proper assets for that department, and the subscriptions which may be paid by persons charitably disposed, and to regulate the expenses for charity, I think there will be funds at the disposal of Government to be devoted to the support of poor when occasion may require it.

* As the superintendence of all endowments for pious and beneficial purposes was vested in the Board of Revenue by Section 2, Regulation VII. of 1817, a Member of the Board of Revenue may be the Commissioner, and the Collector and his Assistants and Tehsildars will be his agents. By this arrangement there will be no monthly charge to devour the assets of the department, which may be kept in reserve for the proper purpose.

29. I beg to particularize the items which, in my humble opinion, are justly liable to be transferred as assets appertaining to the charitable department.

Assets No. I. relates to property which is now taken under Clause 7, Section 16, Regulation III. of 1802, and Section 6, Regulation VII. of 1817.

(1.) The property of persons dying without heirs is now being sold and credited to Government. The proceeds of such property and of all lands of such persons, which are now being incorporated with Government lands, should be transferred to the charity branch, as it is just that the proceeds of the property of a heirless man should be appropriated for the support of those who have no means to support themselves.

Section 132, Act XXV. of 1861, Civil Procedure Code.

(2.) All unclaimed property wherever found, whether by police or others, to be sold according to rules and paid to this department.

(3.) Any portion of hidden treasure which may come to Government under Section 7, Regulation XI. of 1832.

(4.) The net revenue which may accrue from forests and jungles after deducting expenses.

The forests are created by God. No one has taken pains to plant the trees therein. A considerable amount of revenue is now being collected yearly after deducting the charges on account of the establishment. I think it is just that the surplus should be transferred to charity department.

(5.) Any money which may be collected from mines and hills after deducting necessary expenses.

(6.) When a charity department is opened by Government, I am sure that several persons will subscribe to it, as they will be perfectly satisfied that whatever they give will go to charitable purposes.

30. In the event of the above assets not being sufficient to meet the charge, I propose that one pice for every rupee of their assessment be charged upon ryots as charity fund. The rate being small, and being intended for charity, they will gladly pay the same.

Land revenue of Madras Presidency is four crores of rupees. Charity Fund at 1 pie per rupee, 2 lakhs of rupees.

31. The ryots are now required to pay one anna for every rupee of their assessment for road cess, &c. The profit of a ryot is estimated at twice, and in no case exceeding thrice, the assessment, as their profit is charged with charity fund. I propose that the net salt revenue (after deducting charges) may be charged with charity fund at one anna per rupee, as there is a profit to Government ten times the outlay, the cost of a maund of salt being three annas, and the price at which it is sold two rupees.

Salt revenue of Madras Presidency, one crore of rupees per year. At one anna per rupee, Rs. 6,25,000.

One anna, perhaps, may appear to be a very high rate, but in the salt revenue is included a large amount of the price of spontaneous salt which produces itself, the whole amount of which might be said an item that should be credited to charity fund like the forest revenue.

32. If the above assets be deemed still insufficient, I take the liberty of pointing out another source, which will place several lakhs of rupees at the disposal of Charity Commissioner in the event of the Government being pleased to accord its sanction for the measure, with the sole object of having sufficient funds for the charity department.

33. Regulation VII. of 1817 vested in the Board of Revenue the superintendence of all religious endowments; as long as they had been under their management they were properly managed and very large sums of money remained surplus. Several lakhs of such surplus were expended on roads, &c., by Government. In the Kistna District there is a temple at Macherla Village. There being surplus of the amount collected on account of that temple, Chuttrums were built by the Collector of Guntoor, Mr. Stokes, in two or three villages near the Kistna River.

34. By Act XX. of 1863 the Government divested themselves of the management of the religious endowments, which enabled some of the unprincipled persons, who have now charge of such endowments, to accumulate wealth and misappropriate it to useless expenses.

35. If the management of the religious endowment be resumed by revenue authorities as before, there might be a surplus of several lakhs of rupees, which may be transferred to the charity fund, to be appropriated at the places where such large collections may be made. By this measure a large amount of money, which is now being unlawfully expended by

private persons who have no right to that money, will be available for famine purposes under Government supervision.

36. On one occasion a wealthy Native offered about Rupees 20,000 for erecting a choultry and taking measures for continuing charity in it, but the Board of Revenue refused it, as there is no authority for undertaking such trust. If there be a provision for undertaking such trusts, the charitable institutions would increase, and the Government, after deducting the expense for supervision, may charge 5 per cent. on the funds of such works on account of the charity fund above alluded to.

37. I trust that by the above measures the Government will have annually at their disposal considerable amount of money, and that the same may be devoted, as occasion may occur, to preserve the lives of poor people either in times of scarcity or famine without recourse to special taxation, which is not at all agreeable to the people for whatever good purpose such tax collection may be expended.

38. It may be remarked that in the proposed measure there is additional taxation to the ryots; but I beg to represent that when the Government pleased to open a charity department, and pay for their part a rate from the profit they make from salt, the ryots, considering the trifling amount required of them (one pie in a rupee), and the great object for which it is required, will gladly pay it without scruple.

No. 335, dated the 3rd December 1870.

From—H. E. Sullivan, Esq., Acting Collector of Coimbatore.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor to reply to the Proceedings of the Board, dated 18th July last, No. 4921.

2. That the zemindars of Bengal who, three-quarters of a century ago, were made rich at the expense of the peasant proprietors of the soil, whose rights were transferred to them by a stroke of the pen, and who have accumulated wealth ever since, owing to the waste assigned to them at the permanent settlement having been brought under cultivation by the industry of the ryots who were ousted to make room for them, should be compelled by law in times of scarcity to assist their tenants cannot, I think, admit of doubt; but as in this Presidency the bulk of the revenue is derived from small proprietors holding direct from Government, the principle does not apply. In such seasons I have found appeals to private charity readily responded to, and the very fact that large sums, being the surplus of funds collected for the purpose of relieving the indigent poor during the recent famine having been in the course of the past year distributed for charitable objects of a general nature, proves, I think, that no legislation is required in this Presidency to compel persons who can afford it to contribute to the necessities of the famishing poor.

No. 411, dated the 9th December 1870.

From—T. A. N. Chase, Esq., Collector of Kurnool.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor, in reply to the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 4921, dated 18th July 1870, to submit the following report.

2. There are no zemindaries in this District. Of the 3,245,321 acres, which are classed as ayacut, acres 1,031,115 are held under inam tenure, and the remainder under ryotwar settlement.

3. The assessment of the ryotwar portion of four* out of the eight talooks of the District has been recently revised by the Settlement Department. The rate of assessment adopted in this revision may be roughly stated as 30 per cent. of the gross value of the produce. The great relief afforded by the settlement was the more correct distribution of the assessment, which formerly was most unequal.

Ramalkoota.	Nundial.
Nandikotkur.	Sirwell.

4. In the remaining talooks* (which were transferred from Bellary and Cuddapah) the assessment at present existing is the very high assessment fixed in 1805 and 1806 by Colonel Munro when Principal Collector of the Ceded Districts, with such slight modification in individual cases as have been since made with the sanction of the Board. There was, indeed, a *general* revision of the assessment of the Pattikonda Talook in 1858; but the rates of taxation are still so high that Government have thought it proper to order a re-assessment of this as well as the remaining three talooks, and the proposals of Mr. Master in regard to Pattikonda are now probably in the hands of the Board.

* Pattikonda.	Cumbum.
Koilkuntla.	Markapur.

5. I am decidedly of opinion that land-owners in this District are unable to bear extra taxation in time of famine. The condition of the greater number of them is decidedly low. Referring to the rent roll of the District I do not find more than 1,500 men who pay more than Rupees 100 to Government, and of these there are but 10 who pay more than 500.

6. Since the introduction of the new settlement there have been introduced a great many new taxes, the road tax, the village service tax, the income tax, &c., which tend very much to counterbalance the relief the new assessment afforded; and if the proposed Local Fund Bill becomes law, taxation may become excessive.

7. These observations apply with equal force to the case of inam lands. With the exception of a few artizans and religious service inams, all lands under this tenure have been charged with quit-rent. Considering that this quit-rent in the great majority of cases was calculated on the old assessment, and that all the inams have been charged with other cesses since introduced, and that a good many of the inams have been

converted by their owners into ryotwary tenure, there is no reason to think that their case is much better than that of the ryots.

8. The Board do not seem to be unaware of the unsatisfactory conditions of land-owners in this District; for they say in one of their recent Proceedings on the income tax (No 4131, dated 14th June 1870) "the agricultural condition of the District is decidedly low, and the condition of Markapur and Cumbum is wretched. Little or no income tax can or ought to be raised in this District."

9. The practice of hoarding grain does, indeed, obtain among the agricultural population, but I think not to any large extent. A great many are laborers, who seldom lay by more than three or four months' supply with the view of tiding over the months of March, April, and May, when, in consequence of a general cessation of agricultural operations, the demand for labor is slack. The great majority of the ryots have at the most a year's supply. The experience of 1866 negatives any other supposition. Though the previous years were all (except in Pattikonda) seasons of abundant harvest, the failure of one monsoon made itself felt on all classes. If the practice of hoarding to a larger extent than a few months' supply was common, prices could not have reached the height they did, or the pressure have been so severely felt.

10. Money does not appear to be much hoarded. The majority of ryots probably do not put by more than requisite to meet their ordinary wants.

11. If a system of local taxation on account of famines is introduced, what will become of the large sums so liberally subscribed as charity, and which have been of so much advantage hitherto? Nothing will, in future, be subscribed, and the whole amount not paid by taxation will have to be met by the State.

No. 566, dated Chittoor, the 5th December 1870.

From—W. S. Whiteside, Esq., Acting Collector of North Arcot.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I have the honor, with reference to the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 4921, dated 18th July last, to report that throughout the District of North Arcot lands are held on the ryotwary and permanently settled tenures.

2. Ryotwary lands are classed as wet and dry, of which wet lands are assessed at from Rupees 15 to Rupees 2 per cawny per annum, and dry at from Rupees 4 to annas 6 per cawny, according to the quality of the soil. Lands irrigated by wells are specially classed at from Rupees 6 to Rupees 5 per cawny.

3. The classification and assessment of the lands in this District were introduced in 1858, and were again revised in 1864 and 1866,

when further concessions were made to the ryots and assessments lowered.

4. The lands held on permanent settlement are very extensive, and include the four great zemindaries of Calastry, Carvetnugger, Punganur, and Kandundi, and the Jagheer of Arni. There are also six permanently-settled polliems in the District, *viz.*, Bangari, Naragunti, Pulicherla, Kallur, Gudipati, and Thumba.

5. Each of the zemindars is furnished with a Sanad-i-Milkeat Istimirar, with the exception of Kangundi, for whom a draft sanad was sent for the sanction of Government on the 1st December 1868.

6. The Calastry and Carvetnugger zemindaries are private estates, settled permanently on the principle of the commutation of military service, which, in former days, they were bound to render to the ruling authority. The peishcush of these estates was not fixed with reference to the assets, but form a proportion of the cost of the military establishment formerly kept up by the zemindars, including amaroms (cavalry) and kattubadis (village peons), minus the revenue derived from salt, sayer and abkaree, all of which the Government retained in their own hands. The annual peishcush of Calastry is Rupees 1,89,999 per annum, and that of Carvetnugger Rupees 1,80,494.

7. The peishcush paid by the Punganur Zemindar is two-thirds of the annual land revenue of the country, and amounts to Rupees 66,985.

8. The Kangundi Zemindar pays as peishcush Rupees 23,002, which is three-fifths of the annual revenue of his zemindary.

9. The Arni Jagheer is an estate of great antiquity, originally granted for charitable purposes, and still supposed to be held on the same tenure. It is very lightly assessed, paying only Rupees 10,000 per annum, out of an income of upwards of Rupees 1,00,000.

10. The estate is hereditary, and a new sanad is given on the occasion of each succession to the jagheer.

11. The six polliems are all of them of a petty nature. They are all permanently settled, and pay two-fifths of the Teerwah as peishcush. The amount of each is specified in the margin. These polliems are not provided with any sanad.

		Rs.
1.	Bangari	11,615
2.	Naragunti ...	6,596
3.	Pulicherla ...	5,568
4.	Kallur	4,051
5.	Gudipati	2,845
6.	Thumba	1,776

12. The zemindars of Calastry, Punganur, and Kangundi are in flourishing circumstances, especially the two former. The Carvetnugger Zemindar is heavily involved, not from the weight of the peishcush pressing unduly upon him, but in consequence of long continued mismanagement. He is a very easy-going, quiet man, and there is no doubt has on that account been taken advantage of by unscrupulous subordinates. He has lately been cast in some very heavy suits in the Civil Court. Of all the landed proprietors in the District, the Arni

Jagheerdar is the most prosperous. He pays the smallest peishcush with reference to the extent of his income, and gives away, perhaps, less in the way of private charity than any other of the great zemindars.

13. The Bangari, Naragunti, and Kallur Polliems are under the management at present of the Court of Wards. Bangari will be made over to the Polligar in April 1871, when he comes of age. Its condition has improved considerably during the administration of the Court, that is to say, Rupees 30,000 of debt have been cleared off, and the estate will be in a solvent condition when handed over to him. If his minority had lasted a few years longer, there is no doubt that there would have been a handsome surplus of income in hand.

14. The Naragunti estate is very heavily involved. It has been under the management of the Court of Wards for about two years, and Rupees 37,000 of debts are alleged to be due by it. These claims no doubt to a considerable extent are fictitious, but it is certain that the estate will have to pay off a very large amount before it is clear. The minor is still very young, and an opportunity is thus afforded for improving the affairs of the polliem.

15. The Polligar of Kallur is not a minor. For some time his mother, an ignorant, foolish woman, was managing the estate, which, as might be expected, suffered very severely in consequence, and on that account the Court of Wards undertook the management of the polliem. There is not very great incumbrance in the shape of debt to be cleared off, but it will for a long time be in an impoverished condition.

16. The Pulicherla, Gudipati, and Thumba Polliems are not deserving of much remark. They are all very small, heavily involved in debt, and the Polligars are by no means of enlightened ideas, or impressed with a sense of their duties as landed proprietors.

17. With the exception of the four above-named chief zemindars, and the Arni Jagheerdar, there are in this District really no landed proprietors who can be said to be wealthy. This is proved by the great difficulty constantly experienced in collecting the Government revenue due by them, and the last quinquennial return quoted below shows how very few large ryotwary puttahdars there are in the District. The few wealthy men there are in North Arcot have chiefly made their money in trade, and do not own landed property to any great extent. It is evident, therefore, that but very few individuals in this District would fall within the scope of the proposed new system of taxation. As a body, the population of this District is agricultural and very poor. If then a very bad season were to occur, so as to produce any severe or extraordinary scarcity of food, the distress throughout the District would be such that it would be useless to expect the handful of wealthy men alluded to above even to try to cope with it, or render such pecuniary assistance

as would obviate for any length of time the intervention of aid from the State.

Items.					Number of puttahs issued in Fusli 1276.
Ryots paying Rupees 10 and under				... ...	112,456
" " above Rupees 10 and below Rupees			30	...	35,823
" " "	" 30	"	" 50	...	7,992
" " "	" 50	"	" 100	...	4,059
" " "	" 100	"	" 250	...	976
" " "	" 250	"	" 500	...	65
" " "	" 500	"	" 1,000	...	12
" " " Rupees 1,000 and above				... ...	1
					161,384

18. It is impossible to say, with any degree of accuracy, to what extent money and grain are hoarded in this District. No person likes to talk about his savings, and in this country especially are people chary of allusion to their pecuniary circumstances, and that for very obvious reasons; for, in spite of the efforts of the Mofussil Police, the crime of dacoity is by no means extinct. I have already said this is a poor District, and it is, therefore, extremely improbable that much money is hoarded. Indeed, if this were the case, it would not be such up-hill work, getting in the Government kists year by year. I do not believe that much grain is hoarded; either very many of the ryots are in debt to local money-lenders, and their crops are taken in payment of instalments of the principal or interest, or else the grain is sent to Vellore, Wallajahpett, and Conjeveram for sale. If any is retained in store, it is the small supply required for seed, for payment of farm servants' wages, or the food of the ryot's family for the coming year. This, however, can only be done in a good year, and the District has suffered so much from continued drought for several years back that up to this year there has been hardly any grain stored throughout the District. This year no doubt the season is unusually propitious; but then, again, I am making heavy demands on the ryots for payment of the large balance of kist due by them for many years back, and they will have to sell the major portion of their crops to clear off their arrears. In spite, therefore, of the magnificent crops now coming off the lands, I do not anticipate that any large quantity of grain will be stored this year.

19. I have already in paragraphs 8 to 10 treated of the pecuniary circumstances of the zemindars and poligars of this District, and will now only observe that I am of opinion that, with the exception of the Arni Jagheerdar, the great zemindars of the District are by no means backward in rendering assistance to their poor ryots in hard times. There is an enormous amount of charity, that is to say, distribution of food, the charity that most commends itself to all classes of the

community, maintained throughout the District, and the zemindars are not behindhand, I think, in this respect. This kind of charity is apt to be irregular and spasmodic; but in times of famine I believe the zemindars, equally with the wealthy dwellers in towns, are sensible of their responsibilities and duties, and there can be no doubt that they render vast assistance by omitting to collect their revenue from the starving ryots, exactly as Government does in regard to their own people in the adjacent talooks.

20. While, then, it has not been shown that the zemindars have failed so shamefully to do their duty towards their ryots in times of distress as to necessitate special legislation for their compulsion, I would strongly deprecate the introduction of such an Act as that contemplated by the Commissioners, as being certain to produce a feeling of sour discontent amongst the great Native land-owners that it is most inadvisable to excite. They are by no means even now reconciled to the road cess, an impost on account of which they all pay annually large sums to the State, and for which, I am bound to say, they get very little in return.

Name of Zemindary.	Amount of Road Cess.			Total.	Amount expended within the estate on the formation of new roads.
	1868.	1869.	1870.		
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. A. P.
Calaştry	9,300	9,300	9,300	27,900	......
Carvetnugger	20,000	20,000	20,000	60,000	8,347 3 0
Punganur	5,500	5,500	5,500	16,500	999 15 7
Kangundi	2,500	2,500	2,500	7,500	2,032 0 2
Arni	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000	......

21. I have visited each of the great zemindars of this District since I took charge of it, and not one of them failed to speak to me in terms of the greatest dissatisfaction about this money, yearly withdrawn from their purses by Government, without any return to themselves. The recent enormous increase to their income tax has in no way tended to soothe their feelings, or dispose them to regard with favor a new Act to force them to pay that money for charity which they have not been backward in giving of their own accord. The Government may accept as a certain result of the introduction of such an Act into this District the simultaneous cessation of private charity on the part of the zemindars. It would be idle to expect them to submit to a heavy poor rule, and at the same time give away food to a multitude of starving

poor; at any rate it is certain they would never fulfil such an expectation; and the question arises—would the new Act then be of any real benefit to the poor?

22. I do not think it would. I would far rather see a well-considered measure introduced to provide assistance for the needy laboring classes in zemindaries, in which the State shall associate itself with the zemindars themselves. With all deference to the opinions of the Commissioners, I do not think the Government can justly absolve itself of the duty to help the poor in zemindaries in times of great necessity. It must be remembered that in ordinary hard times the Government do not even now render assistance, it is only when the want is severe and widespread that the State comes forward. The Government has a direct interest in the well-being and prosperity of the people in zemindaries, because their revenues are to some extent dependant thereon; and I consider that in times of famine the Government are bound to cöoperate with the zemindar, and furnish aid to the poor in his territory, at any rate to an extent proportionate to the revenue they derive from the zemindars every year.

23. I would suggest that whensoever a season of such scarcity occurs as to call for extensive assistance to the poor throughout any large tract of country, the local revenue officers should be called on to select in the zemindaries such important public works as are certain to return a fair percentage of profit on the outlay. The State should then furnish the necessary funds for the construction of those works, and thereby support the poor laboring class of the neighbourhood. An account of the outlay should be kept from the total, of which a certain proportion should be deducted as the State contribution, while the balance should be debited against the zemindary, and this debt should be divided into a certain number of instalments, calculated with reference to the amount actually expended, which should be added then to the annual peishcush payable by the zemindars. This system, I think, would be fair to the people, the zemindars, and the Government; and, if it were introduced, it would be beneficial to the country, and the zemindars would willingly accept it. They would no doubt have to pay for this improvement of their country, but the expenditure would be spread over a term of years, at the end of which they would be in possession of a valuable work, the extra revenue from which would eventually recoup their outlay, or at any rate pay them handsome interest thereon.

No. 603, dated the 8th December 1870.

From—R. K. Puckle, Esq., Collector of Tinnevelly.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Actg. Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

In reply to Board's Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July 1870, I have the honor to report on the relief of famine by a system of local taxation.

* * * * * * *

13. High prices are, of course, advantageous to those agriculturists who can afford to hold back their grain, and thus watch the turn of the market; but the bulk of the people are paupers, who must sell on the very threshing floor to pay their assessment and cannot hold back their stocks. Such people suffer equally with the non-agricultural classes when high prices prevail, and they could not bear extra taxation in particular seasons of famine.

14. The average assessment per ryot in this District is Rupees 21, and allowing net agricultural profits to be twice the assessment, or, in other words, dividing the gross yield into four shares,—one to be taken for assessment, one for cultivation expenses, and two for profits,—each ryot gets but Rupees 42 per annum. On this he cannot maintain his family and keep up agricultural stock without having recourse to labor for hire as a carter or cooly during some part of the year. I do not think any ryot, with a net income of less than Rupees 200 per annum (less than a laborer's wages in England), can really be called independent, and calculating that he must pay an assessment of Rupees 100 to secure this result, we have only 5,264 independent land-holders in the District.

Including Zemin, Kattuguttagei, and Inams.

15. These pay an aggregate of Rupees 15,83,042, and their profits may be reckoned at 32 lakhs of rupees. These are the only people, and this is the total amount that would be taxable in times of famine, and even a 5 per cent. tax on this sum would yield but a lakh and-a-half of rupees. This District is, however, already heavily burdened; as noted above, full assessment is imposed for a second crop, and the average acreage charge is higher than anywhere else in the Presidency. It is only the present high prices of grain that enable the ryots to meet the demand, and we have much more to fear from a fall than from any enhancement of prices. From detailed statements prepared in five talooks there is no stock of grain hoarded up, the excess of yield over consumption for food, cultivation, and assessment, all in terms of grain, being but 12 per cent. As far as food grains are concerned, the District is thus self-supporting. In the north more than enough dry grain is grown for home consumption, and the deficiency of rice is made up by imports from the river valley. In the centre rice is over-abundant, and some dry grain is grown for the food of the poorer classes. In the south the people live on their palmyras, and on what little grain they grow, eked out in times of scarcity by imports from the river valley. Money, however, is plentiful (hence the high prices of grain in this District), for the exports are so vastly in excess of the imports in value that the flow of money is always into the District; and if the value of cloth, rice, coffee, tobacco, senna, and palmyra jaggery exported aggregates half that of the cotton shipped at Tuticorin, we have nearly a million sterling received to set off against a gross payment to Government of somewhat less than half a million per annum. Altogether the District could, and doubtless would, furnish a considerable sum for the relief of any local

distress, but such taxation should not be resorted to with the view of guarding against future contingencies, but only in case of emergency. The feelings of the people on this subject are already well known to the Board, and I need not enlarge on them here.

No. 608, dated Oossoor, the 5th November 1870.

From—J. F. Price, Esq., Acting Sub-Collector.

To—C. T. Longley, Esq,, Collector of Salem.

I have the honor to reply to your letter No. 910, dated 15th ultimo.

2. I consider that, as far as this part of the country is concerned, the people have not come to that point of civilization and improvement which would cause them in time of famine to, except in cases of the direst personal need, throw the responsibility of maintaining the helpless and needy—a duty which is more clearly recognized by an agricultural and pastoral population, such as that of a greater part of this Division is than any other.

3. I deprecate the introduction of any special taxation of any particular body of persons for the purpose of meeting the exigencies of a famine, or, in the event of its being considered advisable to employ such taxation, imposing it during the time when famine presses, and when most Natives require every rupee that they have.

4. It appears to me that the relief to be given in times of famine is of two kinds:

1st.—Actual food and clothing to the helpless poor, that is, those who are, from age or infirmity, unable to work for their living, who, prior to the existence of famine, have been dependent on the charity of their friends, but who, owing to the pressure of want, have been thrown upon the mercies of the general public.

2nd.—Employment for those able-bodied persons who, until scarcity began to be felt, were either employed by other individuals who are now unable to give them work, or were themselves petty cultivators. The world has, I believe, even in the most civilized countries, always thrown these, so to say "famine poor," on the charity of the public. In India, the people, whose feelings have not been blunted by along course of poor rates, for the most part recognize, as a religious duty, the maintenance of the indigent, and I think that it is far better that the Crown should leave them alone. Whenever a tax is levied for any special purpose, a Native will never contribute to that object from his private purse. He sits down, says—"I have paid my money; let the Circar manage; I have nothing to do with it." The introduction of a famine tax leviable upon the owners of settled estates and rich landed-proprietors will be the death-blow to private charity, will cause endless discontent, and will, I believe, in the main not work so well as the present system.

5. I take it that any tax levied upon the proprietors of settled estates would be devoted only to the relief of the helpless poor, and that, as heretofore, the Government would provide labor for the able-bodied.

6. I think that if there is to be any taxation at all, it should be general; that in the rural part of the country it should be on the land; and that in towns it should take the form of a municipal charge. A tax of one pie in the rupee of assessment would produce a very large amount annually, and this might be permitted to accumulate to a sum considered sufficient to meet the troubles of famine, the excess above this being expended either in the maintenance of hospitals and the purchase of medicine for gratuitous distribution amongst the people, or else in local improvements, thousands of which could be easily found in every District in the Presidency. When famine come, a certain amount of the fund could be devoted to the maintenance of relief-houses, and the remainder to famine relief works. If some such plan as this was carried out, the people would not feel the tax; their tendency to private charity would not be in any sensible measure decreased; if no famine came, they would themselves reap the immediate benefit of the tax; and when a time of want occurred, they would not be pressed and troubled with heavy demands on their charity.

7. With regard to the points which the Board of Revenue in their Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July last, wish noticed, I beg to make the following observations with regard to my own Division:

(I.)—The tenures and settlement of the District and the rate of taxation.

I do not understand what is meant by the "rate of taxation" here. The tenures and settlement of the Division may be taken as two in number,—

(1) ryotwar,

(2) permanently settled, in which, as permanent sanads are about to be granted for them, I include the polliems of the Oossoor Talook.

The ryotwar settlement is about to undergo revision.

If by the "rate of taxation" is meant the average assessment paid by the ryotwar lands, and the proportion of the gross estimated rental of permanently settled estates paid as peishcush, the former is Rupees 1-3-8 on wet and dry lands combined, and Rupees 5-2-10 on wet and 15 annas 9 pie on dry land taken separately. The proportion of the fixed tax paid on settled estates is about five-eighths of the total estimated rental, which was calculated when this form of tenure was introduced. The spread of cultivation since then has, of course, influenced this to some extent.

(II.)—The ability of landed-owners to bear extra taxation in times of famine, considering how the land tax is paid.

If by the term landed-owners is meant ryotwar, as well as permanently settled proprietors, I should say that the former could bear

such taxation as above-mentioned; but I would certainly not impose it upon any but the really rich ryots, of whom there are very few, indeed, in this Division. As for the latter, the greater part of them are holders of a very few villages, are nearly all deeply involved, can hardly pay their peishcush even in a good season, and are muttahdars only in name. The only men who are moderately well off are the Polligar of Shulagherry in the Oossoor Talook, who has, however, had to borrow money to pay off his late father's debts, but who will eventually get clear; the muttahdar of Royacottah, in Kistnagherry, who is a frugal man and owes nothing, but who has lost something like Rupees 20,000 in a recent law suit; the muttahdar of Mahudramungalum, in the Kistnagherry Talook, who can just keep his head above water; the muttahdar of Vycoondum, in the Kistnagherry Talook, who is a well-to-do money-lender; and the recently registered joint muttahdar of Beevahulli, in the Darumpury Talook, who has not yet had time to get into the hands of soucars. All the others are, as I have before said, proprietors of the most petty kind. They certainly could not bear extra taxation in time of famine, and even those muttahdars mentioned by me would find some difficulty in paying up a tax sufficiently large to afford any material relief to the indigent poor of their estates, though, owing to their having stores of grain of their own, they were able, when times were hard in these parts, to assist in feeding the needy.

(III.)—The extent to which money and grain are hoarded in this District.

I do not think that there is very much money hoarded up in this Division. Here and there there is a man who has the reputation of having a fair sum of money buried, but the number is but small. That it must be so is, I think, evinced by the fact that, when we had an incipient famine in this talook in 1866 and in Kistnagherry in 1868, large numbers of cattle were sold by their owners, some of them respectable ryots, in order to obtain food. As regards grain, the custom in the Oossoor Talook is to hoard it up in large pits dug in the fields, and in which the grain has remained sometimes 40 or 50 years without being damaged. I have constantly come across these in the fields, and I know that, when scarcity existed, it was from these concealed granaries that the ryots supported themselves, and even at first exported to other places. I believe that after a really good year, such as the last was and the present is, there will be not less than a two years' supply of grain for the whole population hoarded up. In Kistnagherry and Darampury the practice mentioned above does not prevail, and the stock of grain kept in land is sufficient for but a very few months. The main reasons for this are, that kumbu, the staple dry grain of both these talooks, is not like raghy, one which will keep, and that the soil is not favorable to the construction of under-ground granaries. I am of opinion, therefore, that the money is not generally hoarded in this Division; that reserve stocks to a considerable extent are kept in the Oossoor Talook; and that there are none such in Darampury and Kistnagherry.

No. 356, dated Morapore, the 1st November 1870.

From—E. N. Overbury, Esq., Acting Head Assistant Collector.

To—C. T. Longley, Esq., Collector of Salem.

I beg to reply to your letter No. 911, dated 15th ultimo, enclosing the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No. 4921, dated 18th July last, and to furnish certain information called for therein.

2. As, however, it is not an easy matter to reply *seriatim* to the questions asked by the Board, and as the queries themselves call for occasional remark, I have deemed it advisable to enter fully into the subject-matter of the Proceedings of the Board, and from this to eliminate my replies, which are briefly set forth in a separate column.

3. In the Proceedings are discussed chiefly the condition of the poorer class of ryot in time of famine and the remedy proposed in zemindaries by the imposition of a poor rate.

4. In connection with the talooks of Tripatore and Utengherry, on which I have to report, I shall treat of the following points: *1st*, the condition of the zemindars; *2nd*, the condition of the ryot in zemindaries and under ryotwar.

5. *First*, zemindars are here styled muttahdars. Holding under similar sanads, the terms are synonimous, the territorial possessions of the one being only more extensive than those of the other. Of these, there are in all twenty-four, in Tripatore twenty-one, and the remaining three in Uttengherry. These alone have survived the wreck of estates, which parcelled out after the permanent settlement gradually were assumed by Government for arrears of revenue accruing on them.

6. Since then the muttahs may be said to have been steadily increasing in value. The accounts show a less proportion of waste land than in a Government village, and in many instances muttahs are divided amongst as many as five sharers, all of whom are enabled to enjoy a competency.

7. As shown in the separate column, the muttahs were given over on most favorable terms, the holders realizing from 75 to 90 per cent. of the assets of the lands in question; besides this, their enhanced value may be taken into account, owing to the steady increase in the price of land. I am of opinion, therefore, as far as the ability of the muttahdar to bear extra taxation is at issue, that an additional impost of 10 per cent. would not injuriously or unfairly affect them.

8. *Second*, as to the status of the ryot in zemindaries and Government lands. There can be no question that, as a rule, the ryots are less wealthy in muttah than in Government villages, the reason being attributable mainly to the facts of the ryots in the latter paying the survey assessment only for lands held by them; whereas in the former about

10 per cent. of the cultivators are in the habit of privately paying excess rates amounting to 25 per cent. over those shown in a ryotwary puttah. This is owing partly to the ignorance of the ryot and partly to the state of subjection in which the ryots are held by their landlords, to whom they are indebted in money or grain. Another reason for the poverty of ryots is the refusal of the muttahdar to give remissions in unfavorable seasons. In Government villages the ryots, unhampered by grasping landlords, such as are, I fear, the majority of the muttahdars, are enabled to devote their surplus capital in improving lands already under cultivation, or incorporating waste lands.

9. On the other hand, although the few under Amani protections enjoy greater immunity and larger profits, yet it is certain that the ryots generally occupying muttah lands are more free from distress in time of scarcity than the mass of their equals in Government villages ; nor is the cause of this far to seek; under both systems there must be a certain number of cultivators, whom a disastrous season brings to the verge of ruin. These, I apprehend, are those alluded to in the Board's Proceedings, whose relief is sought by the introduction of a compulsory poor rate. In muttah villages ryots of this description are, at these seasons, assisted by their landlords by a loan of grain or money to be repaid at a ruinous rate of interest. Thus "tuccavi" steps in and arrests the breaking up of the ryot's homestead, enabling him to prepare for next year's harvest, and so saving the degradation of his dependance on a precarious cooly, which lot overtakes the less fortunate in ryotwary villages. In proof of this assertion I may say that in an ordinary muttah village there will be found only 10 per cent. depending on a daily cooly alone for their support, while the number of coolies in a Government village averages nearly 60 per cent. of the population.

10. From these facts I am led to deduce that the status of the ryot in muttahdaries and zemindaries is by no means so identical as is supposed, certainly not so when comparing the cultivator of a Salem muttah with the ryot of a Bengal or Orissa zemindary.

The larger the estate the more will the condition of the ryot resemble the position of the latter under the ryotwary system, and my observation of the management of the larger estates, for instance, the Punganoor zemindary and the Poligaries of the Baramahal, leads me to the same conclusion.

11. As, then, I have endeavoured to show that there is undoubtedly not more distress in muttahdaries in unfavorable years amongst the rural population, who ordinarily support themselves, in fact, as I have demonstrated, that the preponderance lies rather in the opposite direction, I would hazard a few remarks as to the best method of assisting those ryots specified in the two latter heads of paragraph 2 of the Proceedings.

12. The latter class find relief in the prosecution of public works. From my experience I should say that the present system is costly, inasmuch as the ryots are chiefly employed in working on the roads, opening out new and maintaining existing communications. This, however useful, is not remunerative. While this affords relief to the one class, it does not benefit the other.

13. My remedy for both is briefly this : as a rule, there is always waste land available. For example, we calculate that one-half of the whole acreage in the talook of Uttengherry, in Tripatore less than one-third, is waste.

14. As the system of "tuccavi" has been finally abandoned, as land is no longer given on cowle, both of which systems, though faulty in principle, are found to save from ejectment the poorer ryot in zemindaries, I should employ the able-bodied in reclaiming certain portions of waste, by the sinking of wells : this will not only have the effect of bringing the waste into cultivation, but will enable the poorer ryots at once to farm these lands, and so not only will this class be provided for, but the State will lose nothing in the main by their expenditure in time of famine. To this there are objections, namely, the artificial local reduction in the price of the land caused thereby; but I submit this is a less hurtful and more indirect incidence than the wholesale importation of grain by Government, that occurred during times of scarcity in late years; and I would systematize this plan. On the eve of impending distress, theTehsildars should select such waste lands as might most readily be converted into Nunjah. Thus the approach of a disastrous season would not be apprehensive of ruin to the cooly, nor to the ryot, while, on the other hand, nor to the Government need it be a source of anxiety.

N. B.—The separate column will be sent in two days: the preparation of it is delayed owing to the non-receipt of certain particulars from the talooks.

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II.—Refer to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 of the letter.

III.—It may safely be said generally that less grain is hoarded in the present time than formerly. Here, however, the difference is again perceptible in Government and Muttah villages. In muttahdaries grain is more stored up than in the former villages, the reason being that the landlord might be enabled to provide against bad seasons by keeping a hoard of grain wherewith to advance to his tenants in time of need. I consider that the Government ryots store up no more than the year's provision, while the Muttahdars and their ryots allow for two years' consumption. Money is still much hoarded, but less so than formerly; relatively to grain it is, however, much more hoarded. In former days grain was massed and not money; now-a-days the reverse is the rule.

MORAPORE;
The 3rd November 1870.

E. N. OVERBURY,
Acting Head Assistant Collector.

No. 343, dated Punrooty, the 15th December 1870.

From—C. W. READE, Esq., Collector of South Arcot.

To—J. GROSE, ESQ., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I HAVE the honor to reply to the Proceedings of the Revenue Board, No. 4921 of the 18th July last, asking my opinion on certain suggestions made by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the late famine in 1866 for raising, by a system of local taxation, the requisite funds to afford relief to sufferers.

2. The subject is, I feel, one of great difficulty; all I can do is to submit my views as to the measures most suited in my judgment for adoption in order to meet the contemplated exigencies of extraordinary poverty and want, and of extreme famine affecting the people at large.

3. The extract from the report appears to treat of only one phase of the subject, and exhaustive as it may be so far the Commissioners themselves appear fully sensible of the many obstacles that oppose the organization of any system that would fulfil all requirements so as adequately to meet what is wanted, and, as observed by them, "the circumstances of different Provinces are so different, and in many the Government are still in some sense the superior landlord and receive its revenue direct from the cultivators either individually or in corporate self-governed communities," that it seems hardly possible to suggest any plan or arrangement that could be of universal application, still I venture to think that the Commissioners have lost sight of the great desideratum, which seems to me to be the organization of means of prevention rather than of cure, and there is only one system which, so far as I can see, could be adopted to meet the anticipated exigencies, and that is by a fixed rate of universal application within certain limits, and leviable at all times and in all seasons, the funds so raised to be expended in establishing large granaries or grain depôts in fixed centres or large towns of certain, if not all, Districts. Distasteful as such tax might at first be viewed, I believe in time it would commend itself, and nothing could be devised more strictly equitable or that would meet what I conceive to be the great want, namely, timely and precautionary provision, and I see no obstacle to adapting to India some such scheme similar in principle to the poor law of England, to be supplemented by Government in the shape of a contribution, or by the grant of a liberal interest year by year, and the funds thus accumulated to be laid out in such proportion as may be determined upon in the manner already indicated; and my impression is that, in view of the intervals that have ordinarily occurred between seasons of scarcity and famine, the money thus raised would be ample to provide against any sudden and extraordinary outbreak of distress, and this is the great point, and the rest of the burden, if the needs-be arise, should fall on Government and on the public, European and Native, throughout India, who at such times are never backward in responding to any call in the cause of humanity.

4. I will not pretend to suggest how the poor law of England may be adapted to India, nor have I at hand the materials or data to enable me to do so, and of course I am conscious of the general odium that would attach at first to any further fixed taxation, especially when it was in order to meet a prospective want which it may be urged might never arise; yet if, as I believe, the provision that is needed be anticipatory, and the measures required those of timely precaution, and not merely remedial when the burden and distress are suddenly upon us, it is obvious that some system and arrangement should be planned so as to embrace this all-important end, and I presume it is quite practicable to adopt some organised plan answering to our poor laws which might be satisfactorily worked in this country without any real pressure on any class, and, if so, it appears to me the only practicable scheme which could be made of universal application, unless Government were prepared of itself to undertake the whole burden; and in my belief any other than a system of universal application would tell invidiously, if not oppressively, on class interests and give birth to discontent, especially in zemindary Districts where the burden would be made to fall exclusively on the landed proprietor at a period too when he might be least able to bear it.

5. The Commissioners sum up their suggestions as follows:

1stly, that ordinary poverty be left to private charity;

2ndly, that extraordinary poverty and want, affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the land enforced by law;

3rdly, that the most extreme famine, affecting the majority of the people, would be a charge on the general revenues of the country and the subject of appeal to the charity of the general public throughout the country.

6. With regard to the first of these propositions no remark is called for. With the second proposition I am not prepared to acquiesce. A special charge on the land at such times when the masses of the rural population would themselves be so seriously affected seems to me both impolitic and unjust. There can be no doubt, as the Commissioners observe, that the rural population ordinarily support themselves, and it is very seldom even under great pressure that they resort to the towns and to other classes of the population for help beyond possibly to the petty merchants or sowcars of their nearest village or town with whom they may be in the habit of dealing, and who are usually ready at such times to assist their ryot constituents with advances of money or grain, and thus when a bad season does arrive I cannot think that it is the time when the land should be further taxed and be made to bear the brunt of the burden. If the distress be much felt amongst the rural population, the rich towns, where wealth has previously been accumulating and where it is stored, whether in real or personal property, should, I think,

be required to bear their full share. My experience convinces me that liberality exists far more among the rural population than in towns, and in a ryotwary District instances of wealth among the ryots are rare, while the merchants of such a District are ordinarily wealthier than are those resident within zemindary tracts, so that it would be hardly fair to make the cost of meeting extreme poverty and want an exclusive charge on the land. I think if anything of the kind be adopted, it should be assessed proportionately on the entire population, town and rural.

The third proposition is to make the cost of meeting extreme famine affecting the masses of the people, a charge on the general revenues of the country and the subject of appeal to the charity of the general public, and in explanation of this proposal the Commissioners in the closing paragraph (73) observe that, in the distribution of the duties thus to be thrown on the Government and the public, there can be no better rule than that which has hitherto obtained, *viz.*, by Government supplying employment on public works to the able-bodied, and by the public supplying gratuitous relief to the helpless.

7. In the absence of any systematic and general taxation in the shape of a fixed poor rate, to be applied as suggested by me in the preceding paragraphs, I fully concur with the Commissioners in their conclusion. I can devise no better way of meeting the contemplated exigency when it does arise than in the mode now obtaining, but as I do not regard the mere application of a remedy as any real solution of the difficulty to be grappled with the advantage of a poor rate levied at all times is that the funds so accumulated and annually accumulating may be utilised beforehand as already explained, and in this way, on the emergency arising, there would be the means instantly at hand for meeting it, and instead of the terrible sacrifice of life which has invariably attended every occasion of famine through the absence of all measures of precaution, the authorities would be possessed of ample resources in food and grain to avert the first outbreak of so great a calamity.

8. It is clear to me that the devising of precautionary measures is the grand desideratum, and to which the entire attention of Government is imperatively needed so as to be prepared on the necessity arising. The lessons of the past are surely not to be without their fruit, and we are not again going to leave everything till a famine be upon us, and then, as heretofore, be discussing the best means of meeting it—*experientia docet*—and the disastrous results in by-gone years, consequent on apathy and indifference till the last moment, need no comment, and yet, as I read it, paragraph 70 of the Commissioners' Report seems to contemplate the retention of this state of things and to defer the actual organization of measures of relief until the pressure is upon the country, and then to determine on principles now to be laid down what precisely those measures shall be, and how their cost is to be met. I do not

myself feel that this is enough, or that it is practically any solution of the great problem under consideration. Truly, as observed by the Commissioners, with all precautions taken, poverty and scarcity and famine will still recur; and looking to this solemn fact, and to the hitherto putting from us or poohpoohing, as it were, all unpleasant anticipations of anything of the kind, it is manifest that what we have now to guard against is a repetition of that improvidence and inaction, if not indifference, which in the past have ever marked the advent of these eventful calamities until the country has been actually stricken. Before anything could be done, and while measures of relief were being merely concerted, thousands upon thousands of lives have been lost, the great majority of which might have been saved under timely and provident precautions. Is not the question then, what shall we do to avert the dire consequences of the calamity on its outburst, rather than what we shall do by way of remedy when it actually comes? I think so, and therefore to me it seems that a heavy responsibility rests on Government, and unless prepared of itself to incur the cost of timely and forearmed arrangements in order to effect what is wanted, by storing in years of plenty and cheapness as already pointed out, it can only be done by direct and general taxation to be supplemented by Government, and I believe with a manifesto, setting forth the reasons of such taxation, it would be cheerfully acquiesced in by all. But supposing Government in times of prosperity were to purchase the grain, it would be no eventual loss; and though my suggestions may probably be overthrown, and be deemed crude or visionary, yet in such matters, when man is impotent to control the decrees and judgments of God, and it is His providential dealings with us which we have to meet, it cannot be inappropriate or out of place to refer to patriarchal times and to the measures adopted by the great Ruler and Prince over Pharaoh's household and kingdom, and whose consummate prudence and foresight will hardly be said to have been merely intuitive, and thus those measures then adopted in the prospect of scarcity and famine throughout Egypt, and which proved so effectual to mitigate, if not avert, the consequences of the terrible scourge, must have been dictated by the wisdom and mercy of the same Almighty Being who permitted it, and who will gainsay or dispute the forethought which saved both the nation of Egypt itself and the many thousands who flocked thither from neighbouring countries in quest of food to support their very existence. Surely then this wondrous example set us by God himself is not lightly to be esteemed or counted as naught and to be set aside for any mere fancies or chimeras of man, especially after our bitter experience time after time of the utter insufficiency and inefficiency of all that his puny wisdom and ingenuity have been able to devise or carry out. Objections, such as I am aware may be advanced to my proposals, are, in my humble judgment, deserving of little weight, nor, when closely analysed, would they be found to be really sound. Is life to be sacrificed for the supposed interest of commerce and for fear of violating the principles of free trade, and of encroaching on the rights of

merchants and others which they themselves do not understand, and would never have thought of but for our own dubious wisdom in putting them into their heads? It is imagined, if Government step in and store up grain, that the market will be affected, and both trade and consumer injured; let it be so; but have the Government no obligations or rights, and are they to be debarred from fulfilling and maintaining them, and can any considerations be urged so paramount with a Government (especially with a paternal Government as that of India has ever been esteemed) as the preservation of the life of its poor and dependant subjects who have no one but Government to look to for providing them with food at such times, to keep them from starvation and its terrible death, and is a Government to permit a tender and mistaken sensitiveness for free trade to interfere with their solemn responsibilities in the cause of humanity in respect to those who, through the inscrutable will of God, are for a season deprived of the means of maintaining their very existence without help; and, if there be no other way open to effect so just and sacred an object than by those prudential and timely measures to which I have adverted, surely everything else must be held as insubordination, and must yield before the cogency of a claim which all will readily admit throws into the shade every consideration, political and commercial; and if it be fact that prevention is better than cure, according to the accepted adage, it is measures of timely prevention and not those of after-cure that demands our serious thought, and should now be devised so as to avert the devastating horrors of another famine. Since the past teaches us in very distinct and unmistakeable language that for want of precaution and forethought thousands upon thousands of lives at various periods, and only very recently, have been sacrificed in a manner that leaves a dark blot on the historic page of British rule in India; and as it is not money but food that is wanted at such times, and this is often not to be had when needed at any price, it follows that food must be provided and stored up beforehand and in such abundance throughout the country as shall be adequate to meet the first outbreak of any great scarcity approaching to a famine. It is, we all know, invariably the first outbreak which is so difficult to meet and stem, and which has always found us unprepared and unprovided for, and therefore in my belief only in some such way as I have proposed will it be possible to avoid a repetition of like results in future years should God see fit again to visit this country with famine, and I am satisfied that the Government would be cordially supported in any preparatory or precautionary measures which they might adopt for averting the terrible and disastrous loss of life that has heretofore attended every occasion of so calamitous a visitation.

9. Excluding all incomes up to and below Rupees 50 annually from the taxation, one pie per rupee, or say half per cent. on all other incomes, to be levied indiscriminately on the population of all grades and classes, would be felt by no one, and, as I believe, be cheerfuly acquiesced

in by all. I only throw out the suggestion, but of course the amount of the rate, and all other subsidiary measures for assessing it, would be for maturer consideration; half per cent. on all incomes above Rupees 50 per annum would produce ample funds, and indeed, calculating on a few prosperous years, quarter per cent. might suffice; and if in that interval no occasion for utilising the grain so laid up should have arisen, the tax might be stayed until the necessity for a revival of it again threatened, and I cannot think that in this way a tax of such universal applicability, and at the same time so trifling in extent, would be objected to, or be otherwise than favorably received by the people at large when once they were made to comprehend the avowed and humane object it was intended to accomplish. In fact my belief is that the tax would be regarded rather as a measure of eventual economy and relief, inasmuch as by such small annual payments as proposed there would be less likelihood of the necessity for making those sudden demands on them to meet grave emergencies when all feel bound to display liberality, and this considera-tion would not fail to influence their minds favorably to the tax.

10. It is not out of place to advert here to the present prices of grain and to compare them with those which have ruled during the past three years, and a glance at the statement will at once show the little cost at which a provision for several years of scarcity may be bought up and stored in a single season of plenty. One rupee can now purchase as much or more grain of all kinds than was procurable for a like sum in the past three years combined. Can there be harm then or injury to any one by the Government buying up grain in a year of such abundance in order to guard against prospective scarcity and its attendant miseries, and would a tax, such as I have suggested, be felt or, indeed, be otherwise than cheerfully assented to in furtherance of so great an object? The agricultural population, if any, would alone feel it, but in excluding all incomes below Rupees 50 the masses and really indigent would not be touched by the tax, and no one, other than those who could afford it, would be called upon to contribute. The proportion of ryots enjoying an income under Rupees 50 is very great, possibly as much as three or four to one of the entire population, so far at least as this District is con-cerned, and much about the same proportion may be calculated as the average in all towns. The net sum to be derived by such a tax may be roughly set down at from Rupees 20 to 25,000 annually in each District—an amount that would, I conceive, be ample for the purpose.

11. *1st point.*—I will now proceed to notice finally the specific points to which attention is asked by the Board. They are three, *first*, the tenures and settlement of the District and the rate of taxation. South Arcot is strictly what is termed a ryotwary District, with the exception of a few petty poligarships on the western hills bordering on Salem, and the petty zemindary of Vettavalum, comprising 33 villages, assessed originally at Rupees 10,000 and odd, and bearing an annual

peishcush of Rupees 70. The assessment of the District in Fuslee 1232, corresponding with the year 1822, was originally fixed, I believe, at a moiety of the estimated produce or outturn, the money value of that produce being computed at 5 Cullums of about 26 Madras measures each per Pagoda, or Rupees 3½; the other moiety was taken as the expenses of cultivation and the ryot's share. In 1854 a general reduction of 25 per cent. was made, and in 1859 the assessment was again further reduced on all poonjah or dry lands, leaving the rates on nunjah or wet as determined in 1854. I annex to this report a statement* showing the original assessment and subsequent reductions in the years mentioned; and knowing as we all do the nature and privileges of a ryotwary tenure, it is clear that, under ordinary care and labor in the culture of the land, the present rates of taxation are moderate and favorable, still notwithstanding the masses are very poor and will of course ever be so. It may be said that of all classes the ryot is, perhaps, the most improvident, and he usually lives from hand to mouth. In years of plenty, such as the present season, he must part with the greater part of his produce to pay the land assessment, and in a casually bad or indifferent season, when prices are high and the failure be only partial, he is able to meet the Government demand; but the scanty crop does not enable him to do more than put by his little store for his own and family's support until the next harvest, even if it suffice for this, and thus with the great majority of the rural population in a ryotwary District proverty will ever be the rule, and well-to-do circumstances the exception; while the latter class, whose holdings may be large, and who thus have produce to sell as well as to store, part with their surplus grain at considerable profit for the export market, and the money so obtained is usually spent in jewels, cloths, brass utensils, family ceremonies, particularly marriages, and at times they will improve their dwelling-houses and lands, though customarily the last and least attention is given to the lands although the source of all they possess and of their present and future living.

* Marked A.

12. But should there be a succession of bad seasons, or even a second immediately following the first, the distress would be very great, though not amounting to famine. A second indifferent year might be tided over without any great struggle even if it were somewhat worse than the two Fuslees of 1276-77 and 1277-78, but it would be impossible to calculate the effects of a third year of scarcity, and food would then probably be wholly beyond the reach of all but the really wealthy and well-to-do. The prices of grain in the years I have mentioned rose to the rates noted in the annexed Comparative Statement,* and sufficiently indicate what might have been expected had we been visited by another season of a like disastrous character, but happily we were mercifully spared this calamity.

* Marked F.

13. *2nd point.*—The second point is "the ability of land-owners to bear extra taxation in times of famine, considering how the land tax is paid." The term land-owners, as generally accepted and understood, is hardly appropriate to the mass of cultivators in a ryotwary District; each individual of the rural population, it is true, may be a holder or owner of land, but we all know of what his holding or ownership in general consists; the ability then of such land-owners to bear extra taxation in times of famine hardly requires comment. Under the first head I have endeavoured to explain that the great body of agriculturists live from hand to mouth as it were, that is, they first pay the Government demand on their land and manage to live on the rest, supplemented oftentimes by the fruits of their labor rendered as coolies or padials to their richer neighbours and others; while the minority, who are in better condition and circumstances, are accustomed to part with their grain when prices are high, retaining usually only such quantity as will suffice for their own and family's wants until the following harvest, and the money so acquired is commonly expended in the manner already described, so that even these latter could scarcely bear extra taxation without feeling it, unless the additional demand were something very trifling.

14. *3rd point.*—The third point is "the extent to which grain and money are hoarded in the District." My inquiries satisfy me that grain is not, as a rule, hoarded in villages, or in the places where produced. I believe ryots, with few exceptions, hoard grain for a longer period than the immediate year in prospect; they ordinarily sell it and turn all their produce into gold and jewels, &c. It is in the towns where grain is mostly hoarded, and it is the Chetties who are the hoarders of it. It would be impossible, even approximately, to estimate the extent of such hoarding, but I do not think it can be very great, and those with whom I have spoken on the subject repudiate any such hoarding beyond, it may be, of one or two years' supply, and this will depend on the prices intermediately obtainable, as the object of storing is gain; and when the market price reaches a certain percentage and profit is secure, they are at all times ready to part with their stock in hand whatever it may amount to, unless scarcity or a failure in the ensuing harvest threaten. I would, therefore, say that a supply of grain might safely be calculated upon sufficient for the entire population of the District for one year at least, and possibly two years, but more than this would not, I am sure, be forthcoming at any price; and I even doubt a sufficiency for a second year by reason of the export trade, which annually takes away a great portion of the staple products of the country, and because, moreover, all grain deteriorates by keeping and thus is never stored for long periods. Consequently where a succession of bad seasons followed, with each the pressure would increase, and starvation for the masses be inevitable, unless guarded against by timely provision beforehand.

15. As regards the hoarding of money, it is equally impossible to speak with any certainty. Every one knows how close Natives are in such matters; they distrust one another, and, except in towns, all rather vie with each other in avowing their poverty instead of displaying their wealth as too often is the weakness with other nations. There is an innate love and propensity to hoard money, which pervades every class more or less in this country from the highest to the lowest, and with some it is a species of disease, and outwardly the wealthiest will often put on an appearance of poverty that is remarkable. Several notable instances of this kind have come before myself, and one which greatly impressed me at the time may deserve mention : it was the case of a man assessed under the first income tax with Rupees 180. I met this man when riding on my way to the spot where I was to meet the income tax payers in order to hear their objections and finally to assess them. He was walking with scarcely a cloth about his person, and, with a stick in his hand, he salaamed, and thinking him some poor poverty-stricken creature, as he looked, I gave him two annas, for which he made his obeisance ; subsequently when engaged in fixing the income tax on those present, suddenly this man appeared and objected to his tax, which I found was Rupees 180. I immediately recognised my friend, and he acknowledged the recognition and appealed to my gift to him in the early morning. I was then led to make strict inquiry into his circumstances, and of course it turned out that he had the repute of being a miser, and during my conversation with him he admitted that he had 800 English sovereigns, besides rupees, buried within or near the precincts of his house, but where he would not tell, and nobody knew. There are many such cases no doubt, and this love of gold, so inherent in the Native character, justifies the conclusion that it is hoarded up more largely than will, perhaps, ever be known; but for all practical purposes such wealth is as good, as if it were not, for the place of its discovery could never be found out, and a time of pressure or scarcity would be the very time when extra measures of concealment would be resorted to, and its very presence would be more than ever repudiated. Thus, however much money may be hoarded, it would not be getable. The owners would utilise it in dribblets as wanted for the use of their immediate families and simply to keep themselves and dependants from starving, and every care would be taken to create the belief that they were as much objects of distress and relief as any others around them, lest demands at such a time might be made to disgorge of their substance towards the succour of their poorer fellow-countrymen.

16. In all I have written my aim has been merely to offer suggestions which have occurred to me as the most suited to avert the calamitous consequences of famine, or of great general scarcity on its first outbreak. I have not entered into any details for the practical enforcement of my suggestions, because I have little hope the latter will meet with favour or countenance by those with whom the final treatment of this all-important subject rests; still I could not allow the opportunity

to pass without propounding my views which, however thought of by the higher authorities or by the residents of our capital towns in India, would, I am convinced, be received favourably by the Native public at large everywhere. In my experience the question has always been—why do not Government buy food for the people? why do they not provide beforehand for emergencies of the kind when they have had the opportunity, and to whom are the masses of the people to look to unless to the Government, &c.? and, however stereotyped the answers to such queries, they do not give satisfaction to the people, who only regard the subject from one point, and that is the humane one, and who will say that this is not the paramount one, and I am satisfied that a tax, such as I have hinted at, would be cheerfully acceded to, and in reality would enlist universal and hearty sympathy on the part of every section of the Native community, and for one grand reason, namely, that it would be in unison with their own natural feelings and instincts; for the people of India as we all know, with rare exceptions, whatever their failings, have ever been reputed for their deeds of charity in support of the poor and distressed, and the principle of alms-giving is so interwoven with their religion, and is, in fact, the predominating element that influences all they do, that a moderate tax for an object so harmonising with their religious and social habits would be both congenial and acceptable, and would ensure for it a cheerful response on the part of all brought under its operation.

17. I ought, perhaps, to explain more at length how the tax when levied is to be appropriated, and also whether it should be permanent or only for a time. As already stated, at the first the tax should be fixed at half per cent. on all incomes above Rupees 50 for three years' duration, three-fourths of the money so realised to be expended in each year in the purchase of those grains known to be the staple food of the several classes, the remaining one-fourth to be invested in Government securities in the name of the Collector of the District for the time being, and to be made available at his discretion intermediately as the needs-be might arise. After a period of three clear years, supposing in the *interim* there had happily been no occasion for utilising the grain or funds, I would then in the fourth year have the former sold under due notice by auction, and with the proceeds I would purchase a fresh stock, making up any deficiency in quantity by expending all or so much as might be sufficient out of the one-fourth of the funds that had been invested during the preceding three years, and then I would again store the whole. After this first three years as above the tax might be reduced to quarter per cent., and the money be invested annually in the proportion as before, and at the expiration of another three years, if meanwhile the grain and money have not been indented upon, the former should again be disposed of and fresh grain again be stored, and this should be repeated every fourth year in the manner already indicated; but the tax at quarter per cent. should never be abrogated, nor should a less supply than a three years' stock after once starting be kept on hand to

be available at any moment, and the one-fourth of the tax, or so much of it as may not be expended in the purchase of grain to make up any deficiency at the end of every three years, would form a valuable fund for supplementary use on the emergency arising ; and the means afforded by this fund would, doubtless, render it almost unnecessary to make further calls or demands on the public on the occasion of any particular crisis.

18. At first proper and suitable granaries must, of course, be erected. Ordinarily one should be in each range or division of the District at the most central and convenient spot, but this and all other subsidiary arrangements for purchasing and storing the grain and looking after it in the depôts, &c., would be subject of ulterior consideration, but the entire cost of such arrangements would properly be a charge on the funds accruing from the special tax.

19. In furtherance of the object for which the tax would be levied, Government should either contribute annually one-fifth or 20 Rupees for every 100 collected to go towards the general fund for appropriation as described, or, should it be preferred, Government might be relieved of this supplementary aid on the condition and with the understanding, to be notified in the *Gazette of India* and in the official Gazettes of all the Presidencies, that, on the occurrence of any famine or great scarcity in any part of India where the tax was in operation, they would themselves bear all and every additional burden and cost over and above the means placed at their disposal under the proposed scheme without further taxation and without any further call on the public, local or general.

20. Grain we know deteriorates after a certain number of years, and therefore a renewal of the stock seems imperative ; and as by sale of the old grain there might sometimes be possible loss, this will be made up by the outlay of such of the funds invested as may be required, and thus an ample supply would be kept up at all times, and there would be in hand at least the storing of from three to six years.

21. The advantage of the plan I have sketched will, at all events, be a state of preparedness for any sudden emergency and want in all parts of India, while hitherto all has been unprepared ; and further the scheme for providing the means will be felt by no one, while it will relieve the Government and the public from every anxiety in the future, and, as I believe, prove a very great eventual saving to the pockets of both, to say nothing of the saving of life through the horrors of starvation that will thereby be effected under proper and systematic organization and management.

22. I have appended three Statements* giving the basis of my calculations as to the results of the tax at half per cent. in this District on all incomes over and above Rupees 50. In regard to the agricultural population I

Statement B.

* B, C, and D.

have assumed the equivalent of all puttah holdings beyond Rupees 50 to be the taxable income, and this is, I think, a moderate estimate; while, by excluding all puttahs up to Rupees 50, it will be seen by the statement that the great mass of the rural population will be exempt, and upwards of 22 lakhs of revenue will be wholly untouched, and thus the small tax proposed will fall only on those really able to bear it. The aggregate of the tax imposed on trade and other incomes enjoyed by the inhabitants of all towns in the District is, of course, only approximate, but the calculation has been made on such data as the old and present income tax returns have afforded, and it may be assumed as tolerably correct. All incomes from Rupees 200 are clearly ascertainable, and it is only those below that amount that have had to be calculated. The income to be derived from the tax on salaries of the public servants of all grades, European and Native, in all branches of the Government service throughout the District, admits of no doubt, although it may hereafter be subject to fluctuation by any financial charges or reductions that Government may make in the future administration of the country.

Statement D.

Vide remarks appended to Statement D.

Statement C.

23. The entire sum thus obtained equals more than what I have already mentioned, namely, Rupees 20,000, and it will vary in other Districts according to their revenue and the wealth of the inhabitants; but taking the estimate of Rupees 20,000 in round numbers for South Arcot as the average, and multiplying it by 19, the number of Districts, we have a total of Rupees 3,80,000; and if be added the income accruing from the town and suburbs of Madras, which at the least may be roughly put down at Rupees 50,000, the aggregate collections for the entire Presidency reaches the sum of Rupees 4,30,000, and to this adding the Government contribution of one-fifth or 20 per cent. brings up the amount to a grand total of Rupees 5,16,000, as entered in the marginal Statement.

	Rs.
Rate of tax in 19 Districts, at Rs. 20,000 each District ...	3,80,000
Ditto ditto for Presidency Town	50,000
Government contribution at one-fifth of the above ...	86,000
Total ...	5,16,000

24. Supposing the foregoing amount to be considered unnecessarily large, which I can scarcely think, it is of course readily reduced to any proportions; but it will be remembered that my proposal is to reduce the rate of the tax by one-half after the first three years under certain conditions; but at first starting I do not recommend that the tax be fixed at less than half per cent. There will be many expenses at first in constructing suitable granary buildings, and in organising and maintaining the required establishments; there may be besides other incidental charges for collecting the tax and keeping the accounts, all of which should be defrayed from the receipts. After three years a moiety or some

other proportion might possibly suffice, provided in the *interim* no occasion arise for utilising the grain or funds, and the Government contribution could likewise be reduced in the same ratio, or if the proposition of one-fifth by Government be thought excessive, any lower percentage, such as 10 or 15 per cent., may be adopted as the State share. But I submit with confidence that the principle of the scheme I have suggested is in every respect a sound one, and its advantages very great and obvious, while it would be really felt by no one, and at the same time it would secure that full and adequate provision on the occurrence of anything like a famine that could not fail to be a great source of universal relief to all classes and parties, both Government and their subjects; and I repeat that, if Government only assent to the scheme, it will, I am satisfied, find cheerful acceptance and a ready response from every section of the Native community in every part of India, provided of course that the object and aim of the tax be fully proclaimed and made known.

25. Even should it so prove that I have in any wise been mistaken in my calculations as to the actual results of the tax at the rate proposed, the principle will in no way be affected; for instance, say that instead of Rupees 20,000 per District only Rupees 15,000, or even Rupees 10,000, were obtainable, still the main object would be gained only in a modified form, and in such event Government might, without any real additional charge beyond the present estimate, increase its own quota of contribution. Rupees 86,000, which is the State proportion as now proposed for the entire Presidency at 20 per cent., is no great sum for a paternal Government to give in aid of such an object, and when it is merely supplementary of a fund raised by the people to help themselves on emergency, and this sum might be fixed as the maximum contribution of Government to be rateably paid in each District according to the amount of tax raised in each; or a better plan might be to allot Rupees 4,000 as the annual payment by Government to the famine or poor fund of each District, and Rupees 10,000 to that of the Presidency, unless it be considered that this latter may be dispensed with in view of its comparative wealth and vast resources.

26. As more than once stated, I have solely in view to be forearmed and prepared, and I have endeavoured to show that this may be done effectively and without pressure or annoyance on any class or section of society. But if objection be taken to the ways and means proposed, and any other method more practical, economical, and simple can be devised, I should be the first to advocate its adoption so long only as the end was secured, and therefore the scheme I have sketched is merely suggestive, and in the absence of anything better it may possibly merit some little consideration even if, after closer investigation, it should ultimately be set aside.

27. I enclose copies of the letters I have received from my divisional officers on this subject, and with my apologies for the delay there has been in submitting my own report in reply to the Government call.

Enclosure No. 1—A.

Memorandum showing the rates of Land Assessment as per new Settlement in a portion of the old Talook of Chellumbrum, South Arcot District.

Dry: Classes of land.	Dry: Assessment per acre.	Dry: Remarks.	Wet: Sanctioned date.	Wet: Classes of the land.	Wet: 1st class village rate per acre.	Wet: 2nd class village rate per acre.	Wet: 3rd class village rate per acre.	Wet: 4th class village rate per acre.	Wet: 5th class village rate per acre.	Remarks.
	Rs. A. P.				Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	
1	3 8 0	Before the settlement of 1860 there was no fixed assessment on these lands, but Rupees 3-1 and Rupees 3-12-7 per Cawny from Brahmins and others, respectively, was levied.	1838 ...	1	11 3 0	9 14 9	9 4 2	8 9 7	5 4 8	A proclamation has been issued by Government that the rates finally fixed in 1860, the latest survey, were to last 30 years, after which they be subject to revision.
2	3 0 0			2	10 9 4	9 4 2	8 9 7	7 15 0	4 10 0	
3	2 8 0			3	9 14 9	8 9 7	7 15 0	7 4 5	3 15 6	
4	2 0 0			4	9 4 2	7 15 0	7 4 5	6 9 10	3 4 11	
5	1 12 0		1854 ...	1	9 0 0	7 15 1	7 6 7	6 14 1	4 12 2	
6	1 8 0			2	8 7 7	7 6 7	6 14 1	6 5 7	4 2 7	
7	1 4 0			3	7 15 1	6 14 1	6 5 7	5 13 2	3 9 2	
8	1 0 0			4	7 6 7	6 5 7	5 13 2	5 4 8	2 15 10	
9	0 12 0		1860 ...	1	8 8 0	7 8 0	6 8 0	5 8 0	......	
10	0 8 0			2	7 8 0	6 8 0	5 8 0	4 8 0	......	
				3	6 8 0	5 8 0	4 8 0	4 0 0	......	
				4	5 8 0	4 8 0	4 0 0	3 8 0	......	
				5	4 8 0	4 0 0	3 8 0	3 0 0	......	
				6	4 0 0	3 8 0	3 0 0	2 8 0	......	
				7	3 8 0	3 0 0	2 3 0	2 4 0	......	
				8	3 0 0	2 8 0	2 4 0	......	......	
				9	2 8 0	2 4 0	2 0 0	......	......	

C. W. READE,
Collector.

Statement showing the several rates of Land Assessment in Hooloos Talooks in South Arcot District.

Dry.

As per Hooloos. Tarum.	As per Hooloos. Assessment per Cawny.	As per reduction in 1854.	As per reduction in 1859. Tarum.	As per reduction in 1859. Assessment per Cawny.	Remarks.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.		Rs. A. P.	
1	14 0 0	...	...	...	Abolished.
2	12 4 0	...	...	...	
3	10 8 0	7 1 0	1	*7 1 0	* Only garden and Nuttum lands are brought under this class.
4	8 12 0	5 15 0	2	†4 5 0	† Dry lands under the old 1st, 2nd and 3rd classes are brought to the 4th class.
5	7 0 0	4 12 0			
6	6 4 10	4 5 0	3	3 13 0	
7	5 4 0	3 9 0	4	3 4 0	
8	4 3 1	2 14 0	5	2 11 0	
9	3 8 0	2 11 0	6	2 8 0	
10	2 12 10	2 3 0	7	2 0 0	
11	2 1 7	1 11 0	8	1 9 0	
12	1 6 5	1 2 0	9	1 1 0	

Wet.

Hooloos. Tarum.	Hooloos. Assessment per Cawny.	As per reduction in 1854 per Cawny.	Remarks.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	
1	28 0 0	...	Old classes from 1 to 7 abolished.
2	26 4 0	...	
3	24 8 0	...	
4	22 12 0	...	
5	21 0 0	...	
6	19 4 0	...	
7	17 8 0	...	
8	15 12 0	11 14 0	Highest rate is now prevailing, and which was finally fixed and not subject to revision in view to enhancement.
9	14 0 0	10 9 0	
10	12 4 0	9 4 0	
11	10 8 0	8 8 0	
12	8 12 0	7 1 0	
13	7 0 0	5 11 0	
14	5 4 0	4 5 0	
15	3 8 0	2 14 0	
16	1 12 0	1 8 0	

C. W. READE,
Collector.

ENCLOSURE No. 2—B.

Statement showing the amount of Tax at half per cent. on the Beriz of Puttahs exceeding Rupees 50 in the District of South Arcot.

Classes of Puttahs.	Number of Puttahs.	Beriz.	Tax at half per cent.	REMARKS.
Single Puttahs.			Rs. A. P.	
Under Rs. 10	153,938	614,463	......	Excluded.
From " 10 up to Rs. 30	54,251	897,576		
" " 30 " " 50	12,488	481,586		
" " 50 " " 100	7,388	489,079	2,445 6 4	
" " 100 " " 250	2,170	294,371	1,471 13 8	
" " 250 " " 500	217	69,418	347 1 5	
" " 500 " " 1,000	51	32,799	183 15 11	
Above " 1,000 ...	6	8,109	40 8 9	
	230,509	2,887,401	4,468 14 1	
Joint Puttahs.				
Under Rs. 10 ...	19,212	71,309	......	Excluded.
From " 10 up to Rs. 30	5,147	76,426		
" " 30 " " 50	1,139	39,545		
" " 50 " " 100	720	49,307	246 8 7	
" " 100 " " 250	283	41,174	205 13 11	
" " 250 " " 500	37	12,459	62 4 9	
" " 500 " " 1,000	7	4,684	23 6 9	
Above " 1,000 ...				
	26,545	294,904	538 2 0	
	257,054	3,182,305	5,007 0 1	

C. W. READE,
Collector.

Enclosure No. 3—C.

Statement showing the annual salaries of the Revenue and other Establishments in the District of South Arcot, and the amount of Tax at half per cent. per annum.

Names of the Departments.		Amount of salary per annum.	Amount of tax at half per cent. per annum.
		Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Salary of European Officers		57,100 0 0	
„ of Deputy Collector		14,400 0 0	
„ of Hoozoor Establishment		38,304 0 0	
Salary of Talook Establishment—			
1. Chellumbrum	11,592		
2. Villapuram	10,272		
3. Tindevanum	11,040		
4. Cuddalore	10,224		
5. Trikalore	9,552		
6. Virdachellum	9,672		
7. Cullacoorchy	7,452		
8. Trinomallay	8,040		
		77,844 0 0	
Salary of Salt Establishment—			
1. Merkanum	5,280		
2. Cuddalore	2,748		
3. Killay	1,668		
		9,696 0 0	
Carried over ...		1,97,344 0 0	

Names of the Departments.		Amount of salary per annum.	Amount of tax at half per cent. per annum.
		Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Brought forward ...		1,97,344 0 0	
Salary of Land Customs Establishment—			
Mortandy Chavady	2,316		
Madalapet	1,884		
Cundamungalum	1,740		
Vardaoor	984	6,924 0 0	
Sea Customs Establishment—			
Cuddalore	1,536		
Porto-Novo	1,524	3,060 0 0	
Salary of Printing Establishment		2,256 0 0	
" of Political Establishment		1,380 0 0	
" of District Tappal Establishment ...		6,060 0 0	
" of Death Registration Establishment ...		540 0 0	
" of Income Tax Establishment ...		780 0 0	
" of Local Fund Establishment ...		300 0 0	
" of Government Pleader		252 0 0	
Other Departments.			
Salary of Civil and Sessions Judge		28,000 0 0	
" of Civil Court Establishment... ...		23,700 0 0	
" of Small Cause Court Judge... ...		16,800 0 0	
" of ditto Establishment ...		5,148 0 0	
" of District Registration Establishment ...		480 0 0	
" of Police Superintendent		8,400 0 0	
Carried over ...		3,01,424 0 0	

Names of the Departments.		Amount of salary per annum.	Amount of tax at half per cent. per annum.
		Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Brought forward	...	3,01,424 0 0	
Other Departments,—concluded.			
Salary of Assistant Police Superintendent	...	4,800 0 0	
" of Police Force	...	1,16,304 0 0	
" of Marine Establishment ...	...	708 0 0	
" of Chaplain	...	6,000 0 0	
" of Ecclesiastical Establishment	...	750 0 0	
" of Civil Surgeon... ...	...	4,800 0 0	
" of Establishment ...	...	1,200 0 0	
" of Medical Establishment ...	...	6,744 0 0	
" of Conservator of Forests ...	...	2,520 0 0	
" of ditto Establishment	...	1,248 0 0	
" of Vaccine " ...	...	2,664 0 0	
" of Consular Agency " ...	...	3,660 0 0	
" of Inspecting Post Master ...	...	6,000 0 0	
" of Postal Establishment ...	...	12,264 0 0	
" of Telegraph " ...	...	7,464 0 0	
" of Inspector and School-masters	...	12,300 0 0	
Jail Establishment	...	3,072 0 0	
Salary of Public Works Department	...	65,712 0 0	
" of Road Fund Establishment	...	4,932 0 0	
" of Pensioners	...	19,169 8 4	
" of Municipality	...	9,372 0 0	
Total	...	5,93,107 8 4	2,965 8 7

Note.—These estimates exclude all salaries of Rupees 5 per mensem and under.

C. W. READE,
Collector.

Enclosure No. 4—D.

Statement showing the estimated amount of the tax derivable from trade incomes prepared on data furnished by the old and present Income Tax Returns and the old moturpha accounts, as far as these latter are available.

Particulars of past trade taxation in South Arcot.	Rs.	Present proposed tax at half per cent. on all trades, &c.	Rs.
1. On incomes from trade above Rs. 200 and under Rupees 500, at 2 per cent., under the first Income Tax of 1861-62 ...	20,000	Accepting the same returns the tax at one-fourth or half per cent. is	5,000
2. On incomes from trade in 1869-70 from Rupees 500 and upwards, at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.	15,549	The same estimates as to numbers at half per cent. or one-third of old tax gives	5,183
3. Moturpha tax prior and up to Fuslee 1270 on 21,245 shop-keepers or traders, at Rs. 2 per head	42,490	Taking the number at 10,000, and average income at only Rs. 75 per head, gives a taxable income of Rupees 7,50,000	3,750
Total ...	78,039	Total ...	13,933

Note.—The items Nos. 1 and 2 are based on undoubted data, and embrace incomes from Rupees 200 and upwards only.

Item No. 3 provides for incomes below Rupees 200. The old moturpha tax was framed on no fixed principle and was altogether an arbitrary tax, and was levied very much at the pleasure of the local officers of each talook. The returns for Fuslee 1270 show the following results in the trades then existing which were brought under the tax:

Trade.	Number.	Remarks.
1. Tooms	12,882	Tooms invariably paid Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ each.
2. Bazaars or shops, exclusive of the Cuddalore Cusbah.	5,483	Uusual tax from 8 annas to Rs. 4.
3. Cuddalore Cusbah ...	500	Taxed from Re. 1 to Rs. 10.
4. Oil Mills	562	„ at Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ each.
5. Indigo Vats	101	„ at „ $2\frac{1}{2}$ „
6. Paper Factories ...	9	„ at „ $4\frac{1}{2}$ „
7. Petty dealers of all grades ...	1,786	From $\frac{1}{4}$ to Rs. $2\frac{1}{2}$ „
Total ...	21,323	

The calculation, as per statement, of Rupees two per head of the above number of persons assessed under moturpha is thus a very moderate estimate; and by assuming the number of taxable persons of all grades to be only 10,000 at the present time, notwithstanding trade has been on the increase during the past ten years, the estimate is likely to be found very far below the reality, and the income set down to each of these 10,000 at Rupees 75 is also doubtless much under the mark; but my desire has been to under-rate rather than exaggerate the income on which the proposed tax will be leviable, and with these explanatory facts I think it will be conceded, and I am very sure it will eventually be attested by the results that my data is neither fanciful nor merely speculative, while any error or miscalculation will prove in favor of the tax.

C. W. READE,
Collector.

Enclosure No. 5—E.

Abstract of Statements B., C., and D., showing the total amount of tax at half per cent., derived from all sources of income above Rupees 50 per annum in the South Arcot District.

Items.	Estimated income.			Amount of tax.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Agricultural, as per Statement B	31,82,305	0	0	5,007	0	1
2. Salaries, as per Statement C ...	5,93,107	8	4	2,965	8	7
3. Trade, as per Statement D ...	8,27,939	0	0	13,933	0	0
Total ...	46,03,351	8	4	21,905	8	8

C. W. READE,
Collector.

Comparative Statement showing the wholesale prices of the under-mentioned food grains in the District of South Arcot from 1867 *to* 1870.

Months.	1867.						1868.					
	Paddy.		Cumboo.	Raggy.	Rice.		Paddy.		Cumboo.	Raggy.	Rice.	
	1st sort.	2nd sort.			1st sort.	2nd sort.	1st sort.	2nd sort.			1st sort.	2nd sort.
	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.
January	200	197	234	248	501	426	176	157	199	208	420	366
February	147	135	230	218	364	252	171	177	218	224	413	384
March	160	160	236	244	384	379	168	174	210	220	398	372
April	165	160	238	247	385	372	166	163	208	202	372	365
May	171	150	234	235	391	339	170	160	216	214	379	362
June	171	154	231	234	395	356	174	169	220	218	387	365
July	202	163	234	243	390	375	177	165	225	226	391	361
August	183	138	238	248	403	339	177	165	226	227	394	367
September	184	149	229	241	402	364	178	170	179	196	400	371
October	181	150	189	205	406	351	179	168	169	197	403	373
November	172	148	174	173	394	343	180	164	172	192	408	377
December	163	142	161	175	383	332	188	173	188	204	425	391
Total ...	2,099	1,846	2,628	2,711	4,798	4,228	2,104	2,005	2,430	2,528	4,790	4,454
Average ...	175	154	219	226	400	352	175	167	202	211	399	371

Months.	1869.						1870.					
	Paddy.		Cumboo.	Raggy.	Rice.		Paddy.		Cumboo.	Raggy.	Rice.	
	1st sort.	2nd sort.			1st sort.	2nd sort.	1st sort.	2nd sort.			1st sort.	2nd sort.
	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.	Garce.
January	206	189	217	226	462	416	166	146	163	165	382	349
February	182	188	226	232	448	410	134	128	146	150	322	278
March	187	186	228	228	432	404	134	129	151	148	321	281
April	189	189	224	216	428	400	135	129	153	149	322	283
May	188	166	222	214	427	401	132	137	162	156	315	289
June	187	186	242	213	443	394	134	135	172	159	319	299
July	202	189	244	231	459	424	136	134	161	153	321	298
August	211	195	241	235	476	434	136	132	153	150	322	293
September	218	202	207	223	490	444	139	126	120	126	324	291
October	217	188	198	204	488	435	137	119	107	111	312	283
November	209	179	194	200	469	423	112	99	92	95	268	236
December	191	164	176	185	443	391	112	99	92	95	256	229
Total ...	2,387	2,221	2,619	2,607	5,465	4,976	1,607	1,513	1,672	1,657	3,784	3,409
Average ...	199	185	218	217	455	415	134	126	139	138	315	284

REMARKS.—This statement exhibits the wholesale prices per garce of the grains indicated for the past four years made up from the monthly returns for the entire District. Prices will, of course, differ in different parts, and the retail rates at the present time average from 2 to 300 per cent. below what they were in 1867 and 1868. During part of these years paddy was selling in Cuddalore at from 6½ to 8 measures per rupee, and rice from 3½ to 4½ measures per rupee; while now the prevailing prices are 25 and 12 measures per rupee respectively, and in the Districts 36 measures per rupee for the best paddy, and 16 measures per rupee for rice, the varied circumstances of different localities regulating differences of price. These monthly returns can only be accepted as approximately reliable, because grain is oftentimes to be purchased retail far cheaper than indicated by the wholesale prices represented in them. The fact follows that in a year like this Rupees 20,000 would purchase a stock of grain that in 1867 and 1868 would have cost from Rupees 60 to 70,000.

C. W. READE,
Collector.

ENCLOSURE No. 7.

No. 217, dated Virdachellum, the 2nd August 1870.

From—P. L. ROBERTS, ESQ., Sub-Collector.

To—C. W. READE, ESQ., Collector of South Arcot.

IN reply to your foot-note to Board's Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July 1870, for remarks on the proposal to systematize relief to the poor in times of scarcity and famine, I have the honor to state that the tenure of land in the Sub-Division is ryotwary, and that when there is scarcity not amounting to famine the best plan is to lower the taxation on the scanty crops.

2. This would be done with reference to the state of the crops, not with reference to the wealth or poverty of particular individuals. Having then first remitted the tax on withered crops, and lowered it on scanty ones, it is evident that it could not be raised in those few instances when the crops might turn out well.

3. The next thing to be considered would be whether any of the wealthier puttahdars should have extra taxes to pay, that is to say, all puttahdars of Rupees 100 and above; but it would be incomprehensible to them first to strike off the tax on their scanty crops and then to put on some other tax. If it were assessed in the shape of a land tax, say at 50 per cent. of their whole puttah, then every man having a 100 Rupees puttah would divide it and give half of it to his brother or cousin, or even a trustee.

4. It is very probable that the wealthier landowners would have stores of grain, and that many of them would support the poor for the time, taking bonds from them or exacting a condition that they should work for them or plough their fields; but an extra tax at the time would interfere with their ability to do this in some respects, for Rupees 50 taken at such a time from the wealthy puttahdar would mean only one or two people less to be supported by him.

5. As to time of great scarcity or famine not only must there be remission of taxation, but there must be grants of money and grain by Government. It is admitted that ordinary poverty must be left to private charity; the same feeling that prompts the wealthy Native to assist the pauper in days of plenty also prompts him in times of famine, and any interference with the wealthy landowners as such in times of famine will only result in curtailing his means to assist his neighbours.

6. Up to their means they will support the poor at all times, the Government land tax must be remitted in proportion to the severity of the season, and in times of famine the Government must send money and grain if it is wanted to keep people alive. If the communications are in first rate order relief in money may be sufficient; but, if they are bad, Government must send the grain to distribute to the starving.

7. As to zemindars, let us take the case of one who pays Government four lakhs, the land revenue being assessed at seven lakhs, we will

suppose his revenue to be eight lakhs, and thus he gets a balance of four lakhs in his favor to pay his office, to repair his tanks, &c., and keep up his state.

8. Now if there is a period of scarcity, he must lose something, but he always has to pay his four lakhs to Government; then his surlpus will not be four lakhs, perhaps only three or in a famine two lakhs, yet he must keep up his establishment and even carry out some works of improvement. At such a time he could hardly be expected to pay anything more to Government as a landlord. Besides he may be in debt. Some zemindars are wealthy, others lose much in law suits; and if five per cent. were added to their taxes in a year of scarcity, half of them would be utterly unable to pay.

9. Now, suppose the zemindary to be suddenly transferred into ryotwary talook, it is evident that so many remissions would have to be given in a year of scarcity that instead of eight lakhs only five would be realized, and then there would be cost of talook establishment. In the case of a famine the net revenue might sink to three or four lakhs.

10. Therefore replacing our zemindar we find that in a year of great scarcity it would be no extravagant thing for Government to remit a lakh to the zemindar, or, what would be much better, collect the four lakhs from them, but spend on the part of Government one lakh for the benefit of the people.

11. For times of ordinary scarcity the ryot gets remission from Government, and in zemindaries the ryot must get what he can from his zemindar; but in times of famine Government must set the example, and it will be found that the rest is very small after the necessary remissions.

12. In times of plenty Government loses much by a zemindary, but taking an average of year's loses somewhat less. In famine, however, all lose alike—the rich loses as well as the poor. To tax the landowner at such a time because of his land is to add injury to loss; but to tax the rich at such times, according to their proved income on wealth, would be a difficult matter altogether.

13. Even supposing there was a famine in England where poor rates are fixed, it would not be right to put an extra charge on the farmer's land. Such a plan might do in times of mere scarcity or dearness of provisions, but in a famine to tax the land would be to injure the farmer when he had most suffered loss. In times of plenty and ordinary scarcity every District does of necessity support itself, whether there be poor rates or not. At all events there is no great outcry of people dying of starvation.

14. But in a famine I see no reason whatever why the people of a District should be expected to support themselves unaided. That is the proper time to receive foreign assistance. As a man is expected to bear up against all distresses but those of downright starvation, so when it

comes to the latter case with a man or a District as from outside is absolutely demanded.

15. The Commissioners say in their report that Government might advance money to be recovered as land revenue by a rate spread over several years. This seems rather a hard measure on the land-owners, especially as the second case of "extraordinary poverty" is not well defined. I suppose it includes cases of dying starvation, but it does not appear how many such cases make a time of extraordinary poverty. I do not exactly see the meaning of the sentence "extraordinary poverty and want, affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the land enforced by law."

16. Extraordinary poverty affecting considerable classes. Nobody in the world cares much how poor a class of Natives is or becomes, provided they do not die of starvation. Nobody would give money to weavers out of employ unless they were starving. But when considerable cases are in want it appears to me, as far as India is concerned, the case is one of ordinary poverty to be met by the charity of neighbours, or a case of most extreme famine I do not know of any medicine. If the ever-flowing charity of Natives do not keep their fellows from dying, then Government must help; but the case of extraordinary poverty and want, &c., cannot well affect considerable classes without affecting all classes, except it may be that of chetties and money-lenders.

17. From the very fact that ordinary poverty is left to private charity, which is supposed to do its duty, it must be supposed that when considerable classes are affected all must be affected. They can only be affected generally by a failure of crops, and that tells on all but a very few. That is a state of affairs which Natives can tide over for a year, it may be, but a succession of bad seasons throws the whole system out of gear and then everybody does the best for himself. Till the country is in the verge of a famine private charity and private arrangements and documents go to meet the emergency, but when one bad season succeeds another, famine arises. Who is to determine the time of extraordinary poverty, &c.? Are the landowners to be ever afraid of the poor rates falling on them at the failure of the monsoon, or is anything to be defined before they are put in fear of extra taxation?

18. I do not think Government can very well decide the cases of extraordinary scarcity, &c., for in some cases Government have even failed to discover times of extreme famine; but such cases may be discovered by local officers and by the people themselves under the system of the new Local Funds Bill of Madras. The local committee might raise the taxes, or put a few extra toll gates in some roads, and raise a lot of money in a short time for works of public improvements. This would keep many idle men in hand, and for the rest the thriving chetties would no doubt come forward with handsome donations of grain.

ENCLOSURE No. 8.

No. 344, dated Trikalore, the 3rd October 1870.

From—C. STRI BALIAH, Deputy Collector, general duties.

To—C. W. READE, ESQ., Collector of South Arcot.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge receipt of your official memorandum dated 30th ultimo, directing me to reply to Board's Proceedings No. 4921, dated 18th July last, on the subject of raising by local taxation funds required in times of famine to afford relief to sufferers.

From the nature of your requisition at the foot of the Board's Proceedings it was optional with me to have submitted any suggestions or not, and as the subject is one in which I did not think I could give any valuable opinion, I did not reply to the Board's Proceedings.

2. I have since given the subject my earnest attention, and it is to be regretted that, as no further delay could be made, I have not thought it of any use at this late date to consult the talook officers on a subject of so great a moment.

3. In the scarcity of 1866 and 1868 the Government contributed liberally towards maintaining the famine-stricken and helpless, and, as a necessary consequence, there was the financial deficit and its attendant new taxation (income tax).

4. During the two years in question I was in two different Districts, and in 1868, when I was in Cuddapah, I had occasion to observe the operations of the revenue officers towards mitigating the sufferings of the poor. It was to be observed, however, that notwithstanding the distress which, as was reported, was of great magnitude, no laborers could be had for less than the usual wages. This I ascertained by constant inquiries and intercourse with the officers engaged in the works open for alleviating the distress. Labour would be easily had, and on terms as we proposed, should the distress have been actually felt. I was of opinion that in the anxiety, and the heavy responsibility the local officers felt, the alarm was a little too early given or in too black colors, and an expenditure from the exchequer incurred rather to a larger extent than was absolutely necessary. I may not be quite wrong if I submit generally, and not as regards Cuddapah alone, that some of the talook officers entrusted with the money for expenditure kept to themselves a percentage, or spent them in works and in localities where any outlay was not absolutely called for either on the score of affording relief to sufferers, or constructing reproductive works.

A talook gomastah in the Talook of Trikalore did not fail to take advantage of the occasion to form by means of the famine fund a new Tangal to the injury of a larger one, and on this subject I hope shortly to submit my recommendation to remove the Tangal. The outlay has thus been more for mischief than good.

5. It is thus to be seen that the disturbance in the financial equilibrium owes its origin in a measure to waste, and I believe that the frauds so difficult to be guarded against will not recur on future occasions of scarcity should the money be subscribed locally, and the ryots at the locality have an interest in the expenditure.

6. The Government do not, of course, propose to make any law as to "ordinary poverty" and "the most extreme famine" we never had I believe, and I hope we may never have such a visitation.

I would submit that, as regards the "extraordinary poverty" which might recur oftener than the extreme famine, a local taxation may be had recourse to in view to afford relief to the poor and helpless.

Our present rates of land assessment are very low, hardly 50 per cent. of those ruling in 1853, and previously, as shown in the margin. The prices have since considerably risen, as also value in landed property. The ryots are thus able to bear an extra and temporary tax in times of scarcity. The price of food on such occasions is extraordinarily high, and this circumstance affords a further ground for taxation. I would, however, exempt from the "famine tax" persons having small holdings, *i. e.*, those assessed at less than Rupees 70 a year.

Average assessment per Cawny.

	Dry.	Wet.
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
Up to 1853	6 8 0	15 0 0
From 1854	3 1 3	7 0 0

The rate of extra assessment will, of course, vary with the emergency of the occasion, but the maximum should not be more than 25 per cent. This percentage may seem high, but in a ryotwary District like South Arcot the holdings of 70 Rupees and above are few, and bear no proportion to those of less extent.

There are other classes of the community than ryots holding lands, who should be assessed as well. The requisition I am replying to refers, however, to landholders only.

7. The third question propounded in the Board's Proceedings is of considerable difficulty.

The grain hoarded in Districts on occasions of famine varies generally according to the demand in the markets, internal and external, and to the nature of the communications open. In South Arcot there is a great deal of grain exported, and the stock in hand is not probably enough to tide over a season of scarcity without imports at all; but I must also submit, as the result of my experience, that the ryot never sells the grain in hand until he is quite sure of his being able to replace it by the prospective crop, and, whatever may be the price offered, the inclination to reserve is very strong, and it never gives room to the desire for

money. There may thus be grain in the District sufficient for a season, but it will not be parted with on any terms, and the necessity for imports would thus never be obviated, and these exports will, of course, be regulated by the demand and supply in the local market, and the intervention of Government may never be called for.

No. 387, dated Vallam, the 31st October 1870.

From—G. LEE-MORRIS, ESQ., Collector of Tanjore.

To—J. GROSE, ESQ., Acting Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

I HAVE the honor to submit the report called for in the Board's Proceedings dated 18th July 1870, No. 4921, relative to certain suggestions made by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, for raising funds by a system of local taxation to meet extraordinary occasions of scarcity.

2. I shall first refer to the points noted in paragraph 2 of the Board's order, and on which, I presume, they require a report, and then state my opinion on the question of local taxation raised.

3. The landed tenures obtaining in this District are, as the Board are aware, 1*stly*, ryotwary; 2*ndly*, inam; and, 3*rdly*, polliem; the area comprised within the first being about two-thirds, and that covered by the next two one-third of the entire area of the District. I include under the second head the villages comprising the late Rajah's estate, which for all practical purposes are inam.

4. The mode of settlement as regards the ryotwary tenure is that of individual settlement with each ryot on strict ryotwary principles, and the rates of assessment are as follow :

		Highest per acre.			Lowest per acre.			Average for the whole District per acre.		
		Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Nunjah or wet	Under river irrigation.	20	7	8	0	11	3	5	6	2
	Under tank irrigation.	10	11	5	0	8	3	3	3	0
Poonjah or dry ...	...	10	3	9	0	2	0	1	4	0
Bagayet or garden	...	12	7	6	0	6	10	3	10	4

5. The land tax in Tanjore is on the whole moderate, and is generally paid easily. On the occurrence, therefore, of extraordinary emergencies the larger landed proprietors in the Deltaic part of the District will be able to bear a tax for the relief of the rural population suffering from scarcity, provided they are not burdened at the same time with a multiplicity of other taxes, such as a heavy income tax, a local tax, and a schedule of municipal taxes; the landed proprietors living in municipal towns being affected by both of the last-mentioned two.

6. Grain is hoarded to a considerable extent by speculators, as well as large producers in the Delta, in anticipation of a more favorable market; but it is not possible to form even a rough estimate of the quantity ordinarily hoarded. As to money I do not suppose that it is hoarded to any great extent. The available surplus is invested in land, trade, or Government securities, is employed in building houses and making jewels, or is dissipated in luxuries. Indeed, I doubt whether there is any one man, landowner, merchant or sowcar, in this District who could at once produce Rupees 50,000 in coin should any sudden emergency arise.

7. As to the general question of the desirability of raising funds by local taxation for the purpose under consideration on which, I believe, I am expected to offer my opinion, I can really see no need for it. So long as the south-west monsoon does not fail, there need be no apprehension of a general or total failure of the harvest in the Tanjore Delta. As regards the upland portion of the District, which is dependant on falling rains, if it is visited by a general drought, the able-bodied among the laboring classes can find ample employment in the Delta, as well as in Ceylon, where there is an ever-inviting market for their labor; while those unable to labor can find ready relief at the numerous munificent chuttrums of the late Rajahs and others. On such occasions of general distress voluntary private charity will likewise contribute its share towards the support of the helpless. Indeed, nowhere has this developed itself to such an extent as in Tanjore.

8. I do not suppose that it is intended to draw upon the resources of one District for the relief of distress in others, and I am drawn to this conclusion from the remarks of the Commissioners in paragraph 68 of their report, in which I heartily concur.

9. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Board's order I beg to state that there are 13 unsettled Polliems paying in the aggregate a peishcush of Rupees 31,434 to Government in this District; of these the largest pays Rupees 6,577, and the smallest Rupees 351. They are all situated in the south-western and upland part of the District, and are so small and comparatively so poor that I do not imagine that the holders of these estates will be able to support the poor in the manner suggested by the Commissioners in paragraph 70 of their report. The Poligars are one and all in debt; and as they are generally unable to realize their rents

from the ryots, who, as a rule, are refractory, while at the same time they (the Poligars) are more or less given to dissipated habits, it is with difficulty that the small peishcush they had to pay is collected.

10. I enclose copy of a report* from my Acting Head Assistant on the subject of the proposed taxation, which will repay perusal. I agree with all that Mr. Burrows says as to the losses in various ways which a bad season entails on the Merassidars. The land assessment in Tanjore, and more especially as regards Mr. Burrows' Division, is certainly not so very low as it seems generally supposed to be; on the whole, I think the wealth of the Tanjore Merassidars is liable to be over-estimated.

* Dated 31st August 1870, No. 191.

Enclosure No. 1.

No. 191, dated Mayaveram, the 31st August 1870.

From—L. R. Burrows, Esq., Acting Head Assistant Collector.

To—G. Lee-Morris, Esq., Collector of Tanjore.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of Board's Proceedings dated 18th ultimo, No. 4921, on the subject of an introduction of local taxation for the purpose of raising funds in times of scarcity for the relief of sufferers, with your docket calling for an expression of my opinion on the subject.

2. I give my opinion with great diffidence on a subject so difficult. The disadvantages attending any poor law are very great; the greatest necessity alone would justify this kind of legislation. If a poor law be introduced, it must of necessity be of a local character on account of the impressible human tendency "to be over-charitable to our neighbours with other people's money."—Paragraph 68 of the extract.

3. The question then appears to me to resolve itself to this: Is it necessary to introduce a poor law into this Province of Tanjore?

4. It is needless for me to dilate on the tenures and settlement of the District and the rate of taxation. It has been said that the rate of taxation, I mean on land, is low in this District. This, however, can only be said with respect to ordinary seasons. When a bad year comes that large class of Merassidars who have less than, say, five velis of land, are put to it to find the Government teerwah. We must bear in mind the remission rules. It is only a *total* loss of crop which entitles to remission, and it must frequently happen that a Merassidar loses in one year the whole amount of the kist which he has to pay to the Government, in addition to advances of seed and money made to his Poracoody for which there is positively no return, or not more than to keep the ploughing bullocks and the laborers alive till the next harvest.

5. I conclude, with regard to the greatest portion of the inhabitants, that the land-holders are not able to bear extra taxation in times of famine. In such times they are, of all classes in this District, the greatest sufferers. In a succession of bad years an average Merassidar not unfrequently contracts a burden of debt from which he never recovers.

6. It appears to me that we have in this District precisely what the Famine Commissioners call "the purely Native system."—*Paragraph 63 of the extract.* "Almost every man is more or less a farmer, or the immediate personal dependant of a farmer, who has his banker and his banker's book, and the credit which enables him to live from year to year." In a bad year the farmer and all of his dependants suffer in about equal proportions. The farmer suffers in pocket, it is a case of belly-pinching for the farmer's dependent. The farmer supports his dependent from the superfluities of former years, and even finds it to his interest to get into debt rather than lose his services.

7. On the third point, *viz.*, the extent to which grain and money are hoarded in the District, it is my opinion that *hoarding*, in its common acceptation, is going out of fashion. I believe that there is no hoarding of grain, except by speculators and large producers, who do so in anticipation of a more favourable market. I believe that there are a few wealthy men, but not many; at least, if we may judge from their own returns to the income tax, the wealth of these men has been very much overrated. There are in my division seven men with incomes estimated to exceed Rupees 10,000 a year, and eighteen with incomes estimated at less than Rupees 10,000 and above Rupees 5,000; but of the latter class not one has returned his own income as exceeding Rupees 3,000. I do not think that there is any great superfluity of wealth, but I believe that the country could support itself through any emergency, except the most extreme famine (paragraph 72) without resorting to special taxation. But if taxation be resorted to, it should not be in the nature of a charge on the land, but rather on luxuries of all kinds and income.

8. The most extreme famine, which can scarcely ever occur in this District, would be a charge on the general revenues of the country.—*Vide paragraph* 72.

No. 251, dated the 7th November 1870.

From—W. M. Cadell, Esq., Acting Collector of Trichinopoly.

To—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

Adverting to the Proceedings of the Board, No. 4921, dated the 18th July 1870, I have the honor to report as follows.

2. As the Board are aware, the only tenures in this District are ryotwary and zemindary. A thorough survey and settlement took place

in 1864, and the rates then revised and introduced are given in the accompanying statement.* These rates were determined after a careful examination of the productive powers of the various soils, means of irrigation, proximity to markets, and other circumstances.

* Not printed.

3. The Government share was calculated at one-half, or 50 per cent. of the commutation price of the net profits of the land after deducting cultivating and other expenses.

Taram.		Paddy per Harris Callam of 24 Madras measures.
1	... ...	45
2	... ...	40
3	... ...	40
4	... ...	35
5	... ...	30
6	... ...	25
7	... ...	20
8	... ...	15
9	... ...	12
Total	...	262
Average	...	29

4. The nunjha and poonjah lands were divided into 9 or 10 tarams or classes, respectively; these were again divided—the nunjah into 5 and the poonjah into 3 groups—with reference to the facilities of irrigation and distance to market, &c. The land, capable of producing 45 callams of paddy per acre was classed as the 1st or highest tarams, and that which could produce 12 callams as the 9th or the lowest. The average gross produce of nunjah lands thus comes up to 29 callams of paddy per acre as shown in the margin, and the average assessment to Rupees 4-4-0, while that of the poonjah lands is 1 Rupee.

5. As regards the ability of landed-owners to bear extra taxation in times of famine, considering how the land tax is paid, I would observe that the ryots are at present sufficiently burdened with taxes. The marginal cesses, and which land-holders are required to pay in addition to the land tax, have more than covered the difference between the old high rates and the present modified rates of assessment; and if the proposed Local Fund Bill becomes law, their burdens will be still further increased. I would, therefore, very strongly deprecate the addition of a famine tax burdened as they are already now with so many different modes of taxation. An increased rate of land tax, in lieu of all other sources of taxation, would be readily and willingly borne; but it is the multiplicity of taxes, and the rapidity with which one new tax is succeeded by another, that is viewed by the people with distrust and dissatisfaction.

1.—Road Cess.
2.—Village Service Cess.
3.—Income Tax.
4.—Municipal Taxes.
5.—Contributions to the Dispensary.

6. The ryots in this District are for the most part poor, and the little they may have made during the last few years of high prices has been employed in redeeming themselves from their former liabilities, enlarging and improving their holdings, and providing themselves with suitable accommodation, &c.; there are, therefore, in this District comparatively very few ryots who are worth any money. It is also not usual to hoard up grain in this District for any length of time, the

same being generally sent to the market in the same year as soon as the prices rise a little high.

7. The chief zemindars in this District are those mentioned in the margin. The 1st and 2nd are involved to an extent of some 3 and 4 lakhs of rupees, respectively; the former is undergoing six years' rigorous imprisonment for aiding and abetting forgery and false personation, while a good portion of the latter's zemin* is about to be sold in satisfaction of his debts. The 3rd and 4th are indebted to an extent of a lakh of rupees each, and the Civil Court have requested me to place the former's zemin under Government management. The collection of our ordinary road cess from one of these zemindaries was found a matter of much difficulty. I am, under these circumstances, of opinion that none of these estates is capable of contributing for the relief of the poor in times of famine. The ryots within these zemindaries are by no means better off than their landlords; they are already so heavily loaded with taxation that they actually envy the position of our Government ryots, and earnestly wish to become so on the first opportunity occurring.

1st, Torriore Zemindar.
2nd, Arrealur do.
3rd, Woodiarpolliem do.
4th, Marungapury do.
5th, Kadavoor do.

* *Vide* Board's Proceedings No. 4127, dated 14th June 1870.

No. 1587, dated Udipi, the 13th December 1870.

From—A. McC. Webster, Esq., Acting Collector of South Canara.

To—J. Grosé, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

As directed in the Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, dated the 18th July 1870, No. 4921, I have the honor to submit a report on the proposal for raising, by a system of local taxation, funds required to afford relief to sufferers in times of famine.

2. The Famine Commissioners, while forming no opinion as to the liability of the land-holders in ryotwary Districts to afford aid to sufferers in times of scarcity, admit the obligation of zemindars to do so, and recommend the establishment of a system of local taxation for the purpose.

3. In this District there are no zemindars, and the question of the proposed taxation will, therefore, have to be considered solely with reference to the liability in times of scarcity of the richer ryotwar population to support the poorer.

4. In Canara, although the revenue system is ryotwary as distinguished from zemindary, it would be more correctly described as a ryotwary wurgwar system. The wurgs or estates have never been surveyed, the extent for purposes of assessment having been taken from an estimate of the quantity of seed required to sow each field. The assessment is not levied upon each field according to its class, but upon each estate in the aggregate. So long as the assessment upon the whole

estate is paid, the owner is at liberty to cultivate what portion and in what manner he likes. The profits arising from any improvements are entirely his own, and do not tend to any increase of assessment. I give in the margin the number of wurgs in the District, classified according to the assessment paid thereon. Many of these estates have been in the family of the wurgdars for generations, and have always been considered to be absolutely private property. "The wurgdars in part cultivate their estates by means of hired laborers and rent out the remaining portions to tenants, of whom there are two classes, namely, Mulgeni or permanent tenants, and Chalgeni or temporary tenants. The former obtained from the landlord generally, on the payment of a fine, a grant in perpetuity to them and their heirs of a certain portion of land, on the condition of paying annually a specified invariable (generally money) rent; subject to that condition, they are at liberty to sub-rent, mortgage, or sell their interest in the land, and are rather a description of subordinate landlords than mere tenants. The only manner in which their title in the land is liable to cease is on failure of heirs, in which case it lapses to the landlord."

Number of wurgs.	Rate of assessment.	Total assessment.		
		Rs.	A.	P.
14,827	Up to 10 Rs.	55,391	15	10
10,881	" 30 "	2,05,502	13	10
5,674	" 50 "	2,20,672	14	3
4,979	" 100 "	3,43,418	9	11
2,286	" 250 "	3,29,732	13	11
390	" 500 "	1,25,542	11	5
100	" 1,000 "	64,792	4	1
24	Above 1,000 "	34,676	11	2
39,161		13,79,730	14	5

Board's Proceedings, 15th September 1831.

5. It will not, I presume, be necessary for me to advert to the manner in which the present assessment of the District was settled. The subject has been fully discussed in the papers noted in the margin. It will suffice for me to state that the present assessment, though very unequal in its incidence on particular estates, is generally light throughout the District, and that, therefore, the agricultural population, as a whole, would be able to bear increased taxation, should its imposition be deemed just and expedient. Although the question, whether the present assessment on the old estates in this District is permanent or liable to future revision, is one on which the opinion of former District Officers is divided, I do not think it will affect the case of the wurgdar's liability to such taxation. If the wurgdar is the landlord, and holds his estate on the condition of paying to Government a fixed money assessment, he should be considered liable for his share of taxation for the support of the local poor. If, on the other hand, the Government is the supreme landlord, and the wurgdar the

Board's Proceedings, 15th September 1831.
" " 16th November 1843, No. 40.
Mr. Blane's letter to Board, 20th September 1848, No. 74.

tenant occupier, he should still be liable for his share as an occupier, the Government being bound to contribute its share as landlord.

6. As regards the extent to which grain and money are hoarded in the District, I must premise that it is impossible to get reliable information on the subject. That the people are generally well off is shown by the jewels they wear, by the number of substantial houses, and by the general prosperity apparent throughout the District. I do not, however, think that much money is hoarded by the more wealthy classes of the people. There are but few capitalists, the population being chiefly agricultural. The greater part of the surplus income is expended in the improvement or purchase of lands, which, though a less profitable investment, is more secure than lending the money on interest. The profits of the middle classes are, I am informed, hoarded, but not permanently. When the sum is sufficient it is invested. As regards the stock of grain in the country, the Board are aware that the staple product of the District, as well as the staple food of the people, is rice; our export trade is large, and, though swelled by the rice exported through the District from Mysore, shows that in ordinary years we have a large surplus stock of the grain. The landlords and traders generally keep back a good portion of one year's crop in the hopes of a rise in the prices, until the result of the next crop can be anticipated. The trading season closes in May, and by the end of September the result of the new crop can generally be known. It is usually in this month that the prices fall, and the remaining stock of rice is sent down to the coast. Of course exceptionally high prices in other Districts in the months of April and May would stimulate the export of rice from our ports, and would reduce the stock retained in the District during the monsoon; but, taking ordinary seasons and ordinary prices, I think I am justified in stating that the stock of rice in store in the District at the commencement of the year's cultivation will be fully equal to one year's consumption of the population.

7. In this District we happily have no cause to anticipate a famine. The south-west monsoon is copious and unfailing; and, although from a fall in prices there may be a decrease in the prosperity of our agricultural population, or from a partial failure of rain or an unseasonable monsoon one crop may suffer, I do not think that forced aid will ever be absolutely necessary. At the same time I consider that there would be no harm in passing some such law as that proposed by the Famine Commissioners; but, as regards the landed population, I think the money required should invariably be advanced by the Government, and should be recovered as an arrear of land revenue in instalments. In a year of great agricultural depression the land-holders cannot be in a position to pay an additional tax from their income. They will in most cases have to raise the money, and it will be more expedient, therefore, for Government to act as their banker than to drive them to the Native money-lender. It is a matter for consideration whether Government should

not in such cases forego all interest on the money advanced. Looking to the fact that the legal obligation to support the poor of the talook is for the first time imposed on the landlords, it would, I think, go far to render the measure less unpopular were the Government to advance the money free of interest.

8. As the funds collected by the proposed special taxation would have to be administered by the people themselves, it would be as well, I think, if a clause were inserted in the Local Fund and Municipal Bills now under discussion, legalizing the levy of such special rate not exceeding the rates collected for ordinary purposes, and providing for its being expended on relief purposes only. If the sums so raised are insufficient for the relief of the existing distress, the Government should then come forward and bear the cost of any further aid that might be found necessary.

No. 597, dated Madras, the 8th February 1871.

From—J. Grose, Esq., Acting Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Madras.

To—The Secy. to the Govt. of Madras, Revenue Department.

With reference to Government order dated 29th June 1870, No. 966, I am directed to submit the accompanying reports on the subject of raising funds by local taxation to afford relief on occasions of extraordinary scarcity.

2. The Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866 argue that as society advances the dependence of the poorer classes on daily wages instead of land, and their consequent inability to withstand calamities of season, increases, whilst the ties between the poor and rich are weakened, and the sources of voluntary relief are probably diminished.

3. This argument is inapplicable to the circumstances of the Madras Presidency. Two-thirds at least of the population are raising their own food. The land is divided amongst them in comparatively small portions, and there is no sign that this condition of things is altering. Private charity is rendered by the rich to the poor, and even by the poor to one another in a "marvellous and admirable way;" and if this *local* charity withers, as it must, under the proposed system of taxation, it would be impossible to devise any tax short of confiscation which would furnish the same amount of assistance to the poor. They would lose and not gain by such a measure.

4. The Commissioners argue that the zemindars in Bengal are bound to support the poor of their estates in times of scarcity, *because* they relieved Government from this obligation when they took their sanads. This being the case, it follows that in the Madras Presidency, where Government have retained the obligation, they must meet it from their general revenues.

5. But if it is determined to levy the tax on ryots, it must be levied on the greatest sufferers at the time when they can least bear the pressure.

6. It is in the nature of a scarcity that it should impoverish the resources of its victims, and oblige them to look for aid to others who have escaped the same misfortune.

7. It would be a cruel law which would tax poor Districts where scarcities often occur, such as Bellary and Ganjam, whilst it let rich Districts, where famines never occur, such as Tanjore, go scot-free.

8. It seems to the Board to be a national duty for the whole empire to aid any portion of it which is crushed by calamities, such as scarcity or war, and the expenditure, being eminently reproductive, might well be met by loans.

9. The extravagance which occurs in the administration of State money is an undeniable evil, but the Board believe it to be less when grants-in-aid are given in times of scarcity and famine, than it is when grants are made for any other purpose.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Government of Bombay, General Department,—No. 208, *dated Bombay Castle, the* 20*th January* 1871.

READ—

Letter from the Revenue Commissioner, Northern Division, No. 5790, dated 2nd November 1870. Letter from the Revenue Commissioner, Southern Division, No. 4811, dated 30th November 1871. Letter from the Commissioner in Sind, No. 1705, dated 22nd December 1870.	Submitting, with reference to Government Resolution No. 1521, dated 28th June last, the views of the District Officers in their respective divisions on the proposal referred for opinion by the Government of India for raising, by a system of local taxation, the funds required on occasions of famines to afford relief to the sufferers.

RESOLUTION.—Copies of these reports should, as desired, be sent to the Government of India, with an expression of opinion that the suggestions of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa should not be adopted in the territories under this Government, where natural and artificial advantages render the occurrences of a general famine almost impossible.

(True Extract.)

E. W. RAVENSCROFT,

Acting Chief Secy. to the Govt. of Bombay.

No. 209.

SUBMITTED to the Govt. of India with copies of the papers.

No. 5790, dated Poona, the 2nd November 1870.

From—A. Rogers, Esq., Revenue Commr., Northern Division.

To—The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bombay.

No. 1521 of the 28th June last.

With reference to the Resolution of Government noted in the margin, calling for report on the proposals of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, to provide for such emergencies in future, I have the honor to submit the opinions of all the Collectors in this Division. It will be seen that all of them deprecate any fresh taxation to provide against what is considered such a very remote contingency as a famine in the true sense of the word, *i. e.*, an occasion when both actual food should be wanting, as well as the ability to purchase it fail, and that some rather hesitatingly suggest the formation of a relief fund by laying aside a certain percentage of the existing local funds.

2. For my own part, the occurrence of a famine in this sense of the word, in any part of this Division, is inconceivable. The connection of our revenue officers in charge of collectorates and talookas with the people is so intimate that the remotest possibility of a failure in the supply of food must become known to them long before it occurs, and the means of communication by railway, by road, and by sea, are so ample as to secure without fail the immediate throwing in of ample quantities into any part threatened. There may, of course, be a temporary rise in prices to such a degree as to place the necessaries of life beyond the reach of actual day-labourers and those of the agriculturists who have not sufficient credit to enable them to tide over the time of scarcity; but these occasions are so rare, and when they do occur affect only such limited areas, that there is no necessity to provide for them beforehand by any general measures. Happily it would need a very decided change in the laws of nature to stop the south-west monsoon along the line of the Western Ghauts, and, so long as that continues, the rice crops of the Conkan are assured, and I do not think there is a tradition of the remotest antiquity that at all events some parts of the country have not had their crops ripen.

3. When such is the case, it appears to me that it would be an utterly illogical course of proceeding to lay by any portion of local funds to provide against a remote contingency, when by their persistent application to the improvement of local communications the chances of its being felt with severity are progressively lessened.

4. As to what should be done when the contingency does arise, I think that such cases as those mentioned by Mr. Ashburner of the Songier Patels, who preferred starvation to labor on relief works, are so very exceptional as to require to be dealt with specially as they occur;

and that, as a general rule, relief can always be afforded by the construction of famine works at the cost, according to circumstances, of imperial or municipal revenues, or local funds. When either of the two latter was unable to cope with the distress, it would be undoubtedly the duty, as well as for the interest of the Imperial Government, which has not in this Presidency surrendered its landlord's rights as in the case of the Bengal permanent settlement, to step in to preserve the lives of its own tenants. For the relief of merely local distress within their own limits, the holders of semi-alienated villages, such as those in the talookdaree estates in Ahmedabad, may be safely trusted to provide remedies, as they have never failed yet to do, and taxation of a starving people during a famine would of course be a mockery.

5. No hard and fast rule suitable to all circumstances can be laid down as to the immediate source from which funds to pay for such works should be taken, as the distress may be in a place where the construction of nothing but an imperial work would afford relief, and such work may as often be of a highly remunerative as of an unremunerative nature, or it may be in a locality where a work of only local importance would serve the purpose, and the local or municipal funds may prove unequal to the occasion. In the latter case the Imperial Treasury would have to find the necessary money, although it might be fair in some cases to charge interest on it or exact re-payment subsequently from local sources. As a rule we have no zemindars in the Presidency on whom we can fall back to tax in such cases, and the suggestions of the Famine Commissioners are, therefore, inapplicable in our case. The preservation of life must under all circumstances be our first care, and I have no doubt of Government as well as private individuals always responding cheerfully to the call for it.

Memorandum by A. A. BORRADAILE, ESQ., *Acting Collector of Ahmedabad,—No.* 1298, *dated Ahmedabad, the* 18*th July* 1870.

Premabhai Hemabhai, Esquire.
Becherdass Ambaidass, Esquire.
Dinshaw Hormusjee, Esquire.
Runchorelal Chotalal, Esquire.
Padshahee Dewan Saheb.

THE Acting Collector, Ahmedabad, has the honor, in obedience to Revenue Commissioner's No. 3477, dated 4th instant, on Government Resolution No. 1521, dated 28th ultimo, to report that he requested the opinion of the gentlemen as per margin on the subject of Government of India's letter No. 2789, dated 7th idem.

2. They think that a fund should be created by yearly payments from imperial, local, and municipal funds, and that this should accumulate at interest until some great calamity occurred to render its application necessary. The municipal contributions should, they think, be demanded, because many of the sufferers would be residents, temporary

or habitual, in municipal limits. The imperial, because Government is here in the position of the landlords in Bengal, on whom it is proposed by the Famine Commissioners to throw the obligation of assistance.

3. The Acting Collector thinks that, even should a total famine occur in this District, it can be met without difficulty.

4. The railway, as was shown after the locust visitation last October, can pour in any amount of grain, and the system of telegraphs allows of such being received from the most distant markets in merely the time required for the journey or voyage.

5. There is no difficulty in the District itself to prevent grain being transported to any point.

6. It will suffice fully for Government to order relief works, and there will never be a lack of these of a reproductive character.

7. The Acting Collector would earnestly deprecate anything like a poor law with its asylums, guardians, &c. The effect will be to attract to this District all the mendicant refuse of Rajpootana, Kattyar, and the other surrounding Native States, and prevent their rulers from taking their proper share in finding employment and food for their own ryots. The Marwarees are already sufficiently appreciating the pleasures and profits of begging, and anything which should increase its attractions would be, indeed, unfortunate.

Memorandum by J. G. WHITE, ESQ., *Acting Collector of Broach,—No.* 1454, *dated Broach, the* 26*th July* 1870.

IN reply to the Revenue Commissioner's No. 3477 of the 4th instant, the Acting Collector has the honor to state that his opinion, as well as that of the most intelligent Natives he consulted, is that, in order to cope successfully with "extraordinary poverty"—(*vide* paragraph 72 of the Commissioner's report)—it is necessary that a certain percentage (say 2 per cent.) of the local fund and municipal receipts should be set aside each year in every collectorate to form a famine fund, to be applied to meet distress wherever it may occur, *i. e.*, whether in towns or villages.

2. Upon the occurrence in one District of a Presidency of scarcity beyond "ordinary poverty," the fund of that District, if not found equal to the demands made upon it, could be supplemented by an equal contribution from all the other Districts not suffering from like scarcity. These contributions might, perhaps, be repaid by degrees by the District so succoured in after and more prosperous years.

3. Extreme famine should be met as proposed from the general revenues of the country.

4. The above proposals improved upon, and, if necessary, enlarged, might be embodied in a short legislative enactment modifying Act III. of 1869.

No. 2978, dated Tanna, the 25th August 1870.

From—G. F. SHEPPARD, ESQ., Acting Collector of Tanna.

To—A. ROGERS, ESQ., Revenue Commissioner, Northern Division.

I HAVE the honor to report that, as directed in your endorsement No. 3477 of the 4th ultimo, on the Government Resolution No. 1521, dated 28th June 1870, I have consulted several of the intelligent Native gentlemen residing here on the subject of the Government of India's proposals. The opinions I have elicited have been unanimously against any additional taxation as provision against future famine seasons. It has, however, been suggested that a certain proportion of our existing local fund revenues might be invested annually for the purpose of forcing some such fund as is advocated by the Famine Commissioners.

2. The arguments of the Commissioners themselves tend to the conclusion that the relief of rural distress *in this Presidency* is an obligation which the Government has not transferred, and which still attaches to itself. Our Provinces not being afflicted by a permanent settlement, the proposed taxation would fall *on the general public* instead of on a class of zemindars; and I am utterly unable to deduce from the admitted fact of private charity being one of the distinguishing virtues of the Native character any argument in favor of making the practice of that virtue compulsory.

No. 923, dated Godra, the 2nd September 1870.

From—A. C. JERVOISE, ESQ., Acting Agent to the Governor and Extra 1st Asst. Collector in charge of the Punch Mahals.

To—A. ROGERS, ESQ., Revenue Commissioner, Northern Division.

No. 3477 of the 4th July 1870.

I HAVE the honor to reply to your endorsement as per margin on an extract from the Report of the Commissioners who were appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866.

2. The subject discussed by the Commissioners in the above extract appears to me to be the application of a description of "poor law" to the Provinces of Bengal and Orissa. In their 70th paragraph they state that they can make no "recommendation of universal application, because the circumstances of different Provinces are so different," and I

do not understand that they contemplated that the sentiments expressed in this extract would be forwarded to this Presidency for an expression of opinion. From the commencement of the 63rd to the end of the 73rd paragraph, with a casual exception here and there, there does not, in my humble opinion, appear to be a sentiment or comment bearing on the circumstances of the Bombay Presidency; nor can I understand that any opinions that may go from this part of India on this subject can in any way assist the Government of India, unless they are confined to what we may believe to be the requirements of Bengal and Orissa. "The circumstances of different Provinces" (and still more so of different Presidencies) "are so different," that I respectfully submit the question of meeting "extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves," and meeting such a calamity as a famine, can only be treated fairly by the *Local Governments*.

3. The position and climate of Bengal and of Orissa would, I believe, alone form a fairly sound foundation for the Commissioners' 63rd paragraph, that "all precautions taken and all improvements made poverty, scarcity, and famine must still * * recur." But I do not feel called on to adopt this view in connection with this Presidency. There may be some peculiar meaning about the words of the Commissioners omitted from the above quotation, "as the world is now constituted," but while I remain ignorant of it, I cannot accept the dictum that poverty, scarcity, and famine must recur as applicable to this Presidency. We have no grounds that I know of for anticipating such calamities, and I apprehend that before departmental or legislative action can be taken to meet the remote contingency, it will be necessary to establish, as clearly as it has been done in Bengal and Orissa, which are the communities that fail, or are likely to fail, in their obligations to their fellow-creatures, and against whom, therefore, a law must be opposed to force them to extend a helping hand.

4. The antecedents of this Presidency do anything but show that the wealthy Native community are backward to give relief on occasions of sudden distress. Their opportunities of so coming forward have fortunately been few within our boundaries, and no such fearful calamity as those which came on Bengal and Orissa have fallen on our Districts, but that they will, if they do come, be met by ready and most liberal relief, I see no reason to doubt.

5. The question with which the Commissioners principally dealt in the extract under observation, was how to deal with rural distress. They appeared fairly satisfied that "town charity will generally suffice for the town population and even for much of the permanent poverty of the surrounding tracts" (paragraph 69). The rural distress to be met is, I gather from paragraph 70, that which would appear "on the occurrence of scarcity of such degree that the population would be unable to support themselves," that is, on the occurrence of what is commonly

called a "famine," but not what is meant in the Commissioners' paragraph 72 by "the most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people," and this rural distress is to be met by a "poor law."

6. Why did the Commissioners who inquired into the Bengal and Orissa famine propose to establish such a law, that is, to make such "extraordinary poverty and want a charge on the land enforced by law?" Evidently, because they found in their inquiry that (paragraph 69) "the obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates * * *" had been ignored and evaded, and because (paragraph 70) it was their "opinion that the obligation which the zemindars accepted with the permanent settlement, but which they (had) failed to fulfil, should be put into practical operation, and that local taxation for the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindars' rights to be enforced by law."

7. I submit there is nothing in the constitution of this Presidency, its circumstances, or in the character of its wealthy inhabitants, which has anything in common in the question of relief in times of distress with Bengal and Orissa. The grounds for establishing a "poor law" in those Provinces do not exist here, and I do not suppose we are called to assume first that a "poor law" is necessary, and then to endeavour to find reasons for our assumption.

8. Most respectfully I would reply to the reference by extracting the three parts of paragraph 72, and observe that—

1st, ordinary poverty can safely be left to private charity;

2nd, extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves may also be safely left to private charity, supplemented, where necessary, by Government supplying employment by means of public works;

3rd, the most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people may also be left to the same sources of relief, the liberality of Government being greater in proportion to private charity than in the former case.

No. 1745, dated Alibag, the 6th September 1870.

From—J. A. G. Duff, Esq., Collector of Colaba.

To—A. Rogers, Esq., Revenue Commr., Northern Division.

I regret that I should have been so long in replying to your endorsement No. 3477 of 4th July (calling for my opinion on the suggestions made by the Famine Commissioners for dealing with future famines), but I have had very great difficulty in coming to any conclusion on the matter, and I am not acquainted with any Natives unconnected with Government who would be able to give an opinion of any value on the subject. This is probably owing to the fact that this District has

from the nature of its chief crops and its heavy monsoon rainfall providentially known little of the horrors of famine, such a calamity not having occurred for the last sixty years.

2. Such being the case, I am respectfully of opinion that, as regards this District, no legislation is necessary further than to authorize the Local Fund Committee, in the case of extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population, to borrow the necessary sum from Government, and to give gratuitous relief where absolutely necessary, and, where possible, relief by employment on public works. A portion of this sum might be refunded to Government, *viz.*, that spent on gratuitous relief by allotment of local funds annually till the sum was repaid, and, even if necessary, by increasing the amount of the local fund cess to meet the emergency; but I should be strongly opposed to any taxation in anticipation of a calamity which past experience shows this District is so little liable to.

No. 2738, dated Nassick, the 23rd September 1870.

From—H. W. B. Erskine, Esq., Collector of Nassick.

To—A. Rogers, Esq., Revenue Commr., Northern Division.

I have the honor, after consulting some of the most intelligent Natives of this District, to submit the report called for in your endorsement No. 3477, dated 4th July last. Among those consulted, the Chief of Vinchoor, I may mention, was one.

2. All agree in deprecating fresh taxation at present for any purpose, and the Chief of Vinchoor writes most strongly on this point. He states it as his opinion that the people, owing to the existing taxation, are quite unequal to bear fresh burdens. He points out that the salt tax has been increased; that taxes have been taken from inamdars; that revenue is derived from liquor sales, the sale of intoxicating drugs; that the stamp law presses heavily on all; and lastly, that there is now a heavy income tax. In addition to these there are the existing local and municipal taxes, and all these together are, in his opinion, as much as the people can or ought to be called on to pay.

3. The other gentlemen consulted repeat the above in different ways. On one point they seem to be unanimous that the people are already taxed to the highest point they can bear.

4. If it is necessary to make provision against famines, they all state they think it is to the existing local funds that we must turn, and by setting aside part of them from a fund to be ready in any emergency. This fund they would, in case of emergency, expend through a committee or committees of local gentry.

5. Such briefly seems to be the opinion of the Native gentlemen, official and non-official, in this District.

6. My opinion is that there never should be any famine in these Districts so severe that it could not be met without there being any necessity to have recourse to fresh taxation. The District is only a hundred miles from the sea, and is connected with the sea coast by a Railway, by means of which there should be no difficulty to pour into the District vast supplies of grain and other necessaries. And not only is there this safeguard, but the Railway also runs on through the rich plains of Central India, from which, unless there was a general famine, supplies might easily be obtained. Lastly, the District lies so near the edge of the ghauts that a total failure of all crops, early and late, seems almost an impossibility, and would, I think, be quite so, were all the old irrigational works, many of which are now much out of repair, completely and effectively restored. Small works of this kind would bring into the Government Treasury a much more rapid and a larger increase of revenue than the large schemes which now seem so admired, and by diffusing the benefits of water-supply more widely, would in times of scarcity do more to relieve the necessities of the District.

7. Any special tax to provide for so improbable a contingency as a famine is, in my opinion, greatly to be deprecated. I do not believe that the people generally would credit the Government with good intentions; they would, I am convinced, look rather on the tax as a fresh one imposed for general purposes, and would believe that the reason assigned for its imposition was not the true one. The late financial policy of Government has not been understood: a feeling of distrust has taken the place of confidence, and every endeavour should now be made to remove this feeling.

8. This District, as a rule, is now gradually increasing in wealth under the influence of recent high prices, and, in a few years more, a scarcity which fifty years ago would have been called a famine and would have occasioned much suffering, sickness, and perhaps even death, will, I firmly believe, be met by the people without difficulty. Any future scarcity will, I am disposed to think, be scarcity of money rather than of food; food with the railway and the sea available will always be procurable, but prices may, indeed must, be high, and the poorer and improvident classes may not have sufficient money to buy it.

9. But to meet such a case the best course is to encourage industry, and strengthen a feeling of security. Fresh taxation would have exactly the opposite result, and therefore its tendency would be mischievous. It would stop the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the cultivators and artizans, encourage them to lead a hand-to-mouth existence, and render them entirely dependent upon the season. Any pressure would then at once fall on the necessaries of life, as they would not have luxuries to give up, and thus comparatively slight pressure would at once cause distress. Every year, as wealth increases and communications are improved, the chances of famine are much reduced, and there seems to me no reason, so far as Districts like those of the

Deccan are concerned, why any special measures should be taken to avert a calamity so very unlikely to occur.

10. It is not fair to point to Orissa as a warning to this Presidency. No Districts in this Presidency (excluding Sind) ever could be cut off as Orissa was, and I think it may also safely be affirmed that no such scarcity could threaten a District without its being known long before. Under the system in force in this Presidency, with intelligent Government Native officers in every District, such ignorance of the condition of the country as prevailed in Orissa would not be possible. I am then very strongly of opinion that no fresh taxation should be imposed with the view of providing against famines in this Presidency.

11. In any part of the country where there is a permanent settlement, it is right and fair that Government should require of the landholders some guarantee of their capacity to supply their dependants and tenants with the necessaries of life in the event of any sudden catastrophe, but no such necessity exists when Government is the landlord. In this Presidency Government derives the advantages that accrue from the increased prosperity of the cultivators, and periodically raises the land assessment according to the state of prosperity of the country and the increased value of produce.

12. For the very reason then that it is the duty of Government to see that the zemindars under the permanent settlement contribute to support their tenants in the event of any famine, it is the duty of the Government in this Presidency to do the same towards its own tenants, and the ryots may claim to look to the Imperial Exchequer for help in time of famine. No analogy against the desirability of State aid can be drawn from Europe, for there the State is not the landlord of the soil. No argument of primary responsibility for help from the District can be drawn from Bengal, because the Government is only a *quasi*-landlord, and the zemindars share in those privileges and advantages which here accrue to Government alone.

13. I am then convinced that as time passes and confidence in British rule and finances gets stronger, so will famines dwindle into distress, and distress absorb itself in careful management and the giving up of superfluities. What seems necessary to prevent worse evils is, that accurate information should be supplied of any circumstances likely to indicate coming distress. Should the people require aid, they should look to the wealthy part of the population who have ever proved themselves in this Presidency willing to aid the suffering, but mainly to Government, and perhaps, too, to contributions from local funds.

14. Should Government refuse to accept the position of being primarily responsible in case of famine, or other distress, then I think that the difficulty would best be met by forming a sinking fund in each District out of a portion of the local fund taxes, and of such contributions as private individuals might like to subscribe. This fund

might accumulate up to a certain fixed sum which would vary according to the requirements and population of each zillah.

15. Such a scheme with all its drawbacks would, I think, be preferable to new taxes, as it seems very undesirable at present to increase the heads of taxation. Security on which the success of a Government must be built is already much shaken by the increase of taxation which has fallen upon the cultivators, who, though they expect an increase of land tax every thirty years, believe themselves exempt from fresh calls in the meanwhile. This is not true of all India, but it only illustrates the importance of not legislating for different parts of a vast country as if the whole were subject to the same customs, the same contracts, or the same conditions.

16. I will conclude by a reference to the concluding part of Section 69 in the extract from the Commissioners' report forwarded to me: "The obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been recognized by Government, and has never been denied, we believe, by the organs of the zemindars, although sufficient effect has not been given to the obligation by precise law, and we have seen that in practice it has been ignored or evaded. The obligation is in fact one which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country, but which has been transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindar." The argument is sound, and, if admitted by Government in its own favor against the zemindars, must be accepted against itself in favor of the ryots of this Presidency.

No. 20—2913, dated Lulling, the 24th September 1870.

From—L. R. Ashburner, Esq., Collector of Khandeish.

To—A. Rogers, Esq., Revenue Commissioner, Northern Division.

No. 3477 of July 14th, 1870.
Provision for future famines.

With reference to your memorandum as per margin, I have the honor to report that the measures proposed in paragraphs 70 and 71 of the Famine Commissioners' Report are applicable only to the zemindaree districts of Bengal, and to other similar districts where there is a class of wealthy land-owners. In Khandeish where, though there is in each village a small body of well-to-do or even wealthy cultivators, the great bulk of the people are living from hand to mouth, a system of local taxation such as proposed would be here wholly unworkable. I need only remind you of what took place last year in the Sonegir Peita to make this apparent. A series of bad seasons had reduced a large number of most respectable Patels of this

Peita to poverty. Last year there was an entire failure of the crops in this tract, and great distress over the whole of Khandeish. Very extensive famine works were opened in convenient positions. These relieved the whole of the laboring population who would otherwise have starved, but the Sonegir Patels refused to accept relief in this form; they were quite prepared to accept the alternative of death, and if special arrangements had not been made for their relief, they would have perished; but they declined the indignity of working in a crowd of Bheels and low castes for their daily food. Local taxation would here have been impossible. It would only have driven a large class who were struggling for existence on to the relief funds. Speaking broadly, the whole population of this country is agricultural, and when famine occurs in a serious form, it affects this class so severely that local taxation is out of the question. We must look to the trading classes as a source of taxation, and if we wait while a jury is making up its mind to tax itself and its neighbours, the necessity for taxation will have passed away and many valuable lives been sacrificed before the money is available. There may be exceptions, but in no part of India to which my experience has extended are the Natives fit to be trusted with a duty of this kind, though often willing to contribute liberally themselves. They will not incur the odium of taxing their fellow townsmen. It has been argued by the Commissioners that, if famine is not relieved by local taxation, the local authorities will be apt to relieve it too lavishly. The answer to this is that, when a whole population is starving, taxation is not likely to relieve them; and if local taxation is alone to be looked to, death will probably afford relief before taxation. The idea that the local officers are an unprincipled, untrustworthy lot seems to be the great difficulty the Commissioners have to provide for, and local taxation is proposed as a check to excessive charity. They observe—"It has yet to be shown that the charity which takes the shape of distribution of food in times of scarcity will not, if well used and guided, suffice to support the poor of towns." I appeal to the experience of any officer who has had to deal with extensive relief works to contradict this opinion. The distribution of food may do something to alleviate distress, but it is quite inadequate to relieve the starving population of a large town. The most painful cases of starvation will occur in respectable families, who like the Patels of the Sonegir Peita prefer death to the dishonor of relief in this form.

2. If the zemindars of permanently-settled districts are to be taxed for the relief of famine, and I quite concur in thinking that they should be, it follows that in the Bombay Presidency, where Government is the great zemindar, the treasury should provide for the relief of distress, and, unless the local officers are taught the saving of a few rupees or a few lakhs of rupees is of greater importance than the lives of a population, they must be not only permitted but encouraged to spend money freely, when such expenditure is necessary to save life from starvation. The local officers should be held personally responsible

if deaths from starvation occur in their districts, which might have been avoided by timely relief.

The following are the instructions of the Government of India on the subject of famine relief: "No formalities or risk of eventual loss on the operations put in hand should stand in the way of giving relief to any section of the community seriously suffering from the high price of food * * * In all measures of relief the primary object is the prevention of suffering, and this object should be kept in view, even though in some cases the aid afforded by Government and the charitable may be wasted on those for whom it is not primarily intended." I should be sorry to see these instructions superseded by the less liberal views of the Commissioners.

Paragraph 4, from Secretary to the Government of India to Government, North-Western Provinces, No. 4978 of 23rd December 1868.

3. In a country where the great bulk of the people are agricultural, depending on the crops of each season to supply them with food till the following harvest, a failure of one monsoon produces famine more or less extensive according to circumstances. We must accept this as an inevitable condition of our position in this country, and provide for it not by extra taxation by juries of intelligent Natives when the famine has actually occurred, but by works of irrigation, which will render the cultivator independent of a capricious monsoon, and by roads,* which will enable food to be imported into a famine-stricken district.

4. By works of irrigation I do not mean those gigantic schemes by which ambitious engineers endeavour to immortalize themselves, but by such humble works as Sir Mark Cubbon has covered the Mysore country, those of Colonels Dixon in Marwara and Keatinge in Nimar—works which have been for the most part constructed without professional assistance, and which enable each village to irrigate a few hundred acres of land. Such works for instance as the Hurtala tank, which, after having been planned and estimated and corresponded about for two years, is at last likely to be abandoned. I do not wish it to be understood that I object to large irrigation works; but in the present state of the finances they are beyond our reach, their plans and estimates take seven years to prepare, and then the estimate is so enormous that they are declared impracticable. By roads I do not mean moorumed roads, which cost Rupees 14,000 per mile without the big bridges, but by roads which will enable a cart to travel at all seasons of the year, which experience has proved can be built when moorum is available for about Rupees 5,000 per mile. I shall be of course told that I am dealing in platitudes; that what I say may be true, but that there are no funds available. I reply that unlimited funds can be got for 4 per cent., while famine costs 50 per cent. or more, and that, therefore, to neglect necessary work on this account is, to say the least of it, bad economy.

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* Rail roads, tram roads, metalled roads, moorumed roads, and cleared roads.

No. 4811, dated Camp Shindgee, the 30th November 1870.

From—W. H. HAVELOCK, Esq., Revenue Commissioner, Southern Division.

To—The Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Bombay.

I HAVE the honor to reply to the Government Resolution No. 1521, dated 28th June 1870, relating to the suggestions of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866 for raising by a system of local taxation the funds required on such extraordinary occasions to afford relief to the sufferers.

2. Annexed is a summary of the replies of the Collectors, Southern Division, except Poona, to my reference to them on the subject. The Collector has not yet replied, but I deem it unnecessary longer to await his report.

3. It will be observed that the Collectors, whose reports are embodied in the summary, are unanimous in considering that local taxation, such as that proposed by the Famine Commissioners, is unsuitable to the circumstances of this Presidency, in which there is no class of landholders corresponding in position with the zemindars of Bengal whose obligations to support the poor of their estates in times of famine are described in paragraph 69 of the report of the Commissioners.

4. In ordinary times of distress there has been a spontaneous flow of charity from the population of this country highly commendable, and the imposition of any compulsory taxation, in the present unsettled notions of popular taxes, would, it is generally feared, have a tendency rather to restrain the charitable public from rendering assistance to their poorer brethren in times of scarcity than to encourage them in their good deeds. My own opinion on this point is concurrent with that of the Collectors.

5. Government have in recent years turned their attention to the execution of works of irrigation on a large scale, with the view of abating, as far as possible, the evils arising from failures of the monsoon. This measure, even if attended with success, cannot operate for the benefit of all, and there must continue to be numerous cases of distress for the alleviation of which the sympathies of the better-to-do public and of Government must from time to time be invoked.

6. The report on past famines in the Bombay Presidency, compiled by Lieutenant-Colonel Etheridge and published as a Government Selection in 1868, contains valuable information as to the aid which the charitable public have afforded in the hour of need. Government have also invariably responded liberally to such calls, and numerous works of public utility have been undertaken with the main object of supplying food on such occasions to the starving poor.

7. Considering the position Government hold in this Presidency with respect to the main body of the agriculturists, *viz.*, that of landlord, it appears that, if any recognized source of income must be established to meet the contingencies of famine, the plan suggested by Mr. Grey, Collector of Belgaum, of forming a sinking fund, would seem desirable. To it might be added from time to time any unexpended grants made by Government for famine relief and other similar works, and I think it should be laid down as an established rule that whenever, failing assistance from the general public, Government are called on to afford relief, it should, as far as practicable, take the form of expenditure on public works, and the laborers be paid at least partly in kind instead of money.

P. S.—Since the foregoing letter was drafted, I have received from the Collector of Poona his report* on the subject, which, together with its accompaniment, is submitted herewith in original for the information of Government. I may add that a perusal of these papers confirms the general views already expressed by me.

* No. 2373, dated 24th instant.

Summary of the replies of the Collectors in the Southern Division to the Government reference regarding the future liability of Bombay to famine and the means of mitigating the calamity.

Ahmednuggur.

I. MR. D'OYLY is averse to local taxation in anticipation as a measure of relief in case of famine. There is no class here like the Bengal zemindars: the jagheerdars are for the most part in debt. Though some of the traders are wealthy, it appears hard that the burden of taxation of this description should fall solely on them. Local taxation has increased greatly of late years, and is very unpopular.

The Collector doubts whether a famine in the full sense of the word from natural causes is a thing known in the country which forms this Presidency. By famine Mr. D'Oyly means the total failure of crops over a considerable tract of country during any one year, or a serious failure of crops during a series of years, so that sufficient food does not exist in the land to support the inhabitants. Partial failure no doubt frequently occurs, but the researches of Colonel Etheridge seem to indicate that the great historical famines in this part of India have been caused rather by the hand of man than by the visitation of God. Notably the famine of 1803 was caused by the ravages of Holkar. If this view be correct, there is no reason to anticipate in future an amount of distress which existing resources are not sufficient to meet.

Belgaum.

II. Mr. Grey offers the following remarks :

The suggestions made by the Famine Commissioners for raising by a system of local taxation funds required on the extraordinary occasions of famine to afford relief to sufferers appear to have occurred to them from a consideration of the circumstances of Bengal and Orissa, where society is in a very different position to that of the greater part of Western India. It is possible that in a community in the midst of which wealthy zemindars reside funds might be raised by local taxation on which the poor might be maintained in times of great scarcity. In this part of the country such means of meeting the calamity would tend rather to intensify the distress than to diminish it. If unfortunately a famine prevailed in the land, all would be affected by it, the landholders equally with those dependent on labor, and an extraordinary and distasteful tax would be imposed at a time when they would be least able to bear it. There are no landholders of any great extent in this district. Such as they are, some cultivate a portion of their estate themselves; others let out a good deal of it; they are all more or less in debt, and chiefly dependent on the rents which they receive, or what they can make out of the land which they themselves hold; their resources would be greatly curtailed both by their own land failing to produce crops from want of rain or other causes, or by their tenants from the same reason being unable to meet their engagements. It is remarkable how the people throughout this country, in their simple way, recognize the duty of charity, and how many will cripple their means and even incur debts to fulfil what they consider the sacred obligation of feeding the poor; one sees it at all times, and it is impossible to imagine that in a time of distress the efforts of the Hindoos to assist their needy brethren would not be greatly increased. I should be sorry to see the current of private charity checked, if not altogether dried up, by a hateful compulsory tax, which it would be almost impossible to levy justly, and which would probably be viewed as one of the many contrivances which the Government resort to for the purposes of increasing its revenue. A better course would be to set apart yearly a certain percentage of the revenue of the districts where famines have unhappily occurred, and to form a sinking fund from which to draw on occasions of emergency. Historical information has been collected of the districts where scarcity has on former occasions prevailed, and it is in these localities that a certain sum might be set aside to be used only at a period of want and distress.

Canara.

III. Mr. Elphinston states that the opinion of the Commissioners quoted in the Government Resolution No. 1521 of 28th June 1870 does not apply to the Bombay Presidency, where the ryotwary system of land taxation prevails; consequently paragraphs 70 and 71 of their report, though admirably adapted to Bengal, will not answer for this Presidency.

The arrangements suggested at the end of the 70th paragraph might, the Collector says, be made, and they are made constantly, by the charitably-disposed in this Presidency. Many a Mamlutdar and Assistant Collector does, Mr. Elphinston believes, in times of temporary local distress, get up a subscription for its relief without the circumstances being reported to Government, or any law being passed for compulsory taxation.

Where poverty affects such large classes as to put it out of the power of self-imposed taxation to relieve it, their relief should, the Collector is of opinion, be effected by a charge rather on property generally, by an income tax, than on the landed classes, who enjoy no special privileges like those in Bengal.

The proposed taxation should not be sanctioned except where it may appear that the distress is great, and that the moneyed classes have failed to do what might have been reasonably expected from their incomes to alleviate the distress of their poor neighbours.

There is some fear that taxation may induce people to confine their help to what the law may compel them to give. For this reason the Collector says it should not be resorted to except as a last resource.

Much may be done by District Officers in inducing importations of grain from where it is sold cheap, and by sales of it under the artificial rate, which the local grain sellers combine to keep it at.

This the Collector has known on more than one occasion to have relieved wide-felt distress among the laboring classes. This is sometimes effected by simply sending word to the place where grain is cheap of the high prices prevailing.

If means were adopted by the local authorities to induce the local society to assist the helpless poor, by contributions either of grain or money, it is probable such help would seldom be wanting; but the Collector is not prepared to agree with the Commissioners entirely in the opinion expressed in their 65th paragraph. Instances have occurred in the Collector's experience where persons, guilty of breach of a caste rule, have been thrown out upon public charity. It would in Mr. Elphinston's opinion be a useful measure could poor houses be established, where persons helpless either by reason of mental or physical weakness, or tenderness of age, should be relieved by local, *i. e.*, parochial taxation.

To recapitulate, the Collector would advocate that for relief of distress in famines taxation be legalized only when voluntary action has not taken place, or is insufficient, and that this taxation be generally on all classes of society in the nature of a proper tax, but independent taxation, in times of famine and distress. The Collector would be glad to see some system of parochial relief legalized whereby the revenue officers in charge of talookas would be empowered to send helpless poor people to their own villages at the public expense, and to compel their families, and failing them the villagers generally, to give in proportion to their

means for their support. This might be done by fixing the responsibility on the caste corporations, and failing their voluntary action, by a grant from the public treasury, to be recovered by a special cess on the caste, or if the caste cannot afford it, on the village.

In forwarding the annexed reports from his assistants, Mr. Elphinston observes as follows :

"I am not in favor of such general and permanent taxation as is referred to in the 9th paragraph of the Carwar Superintendent's report. The people are disgusted sufficiently with the stamp, income, and salt taxes, and such a tax as is there proposed would only render the people averse to any voluntary action, and would throw the whole responsibility of relieving distress in future on the State."

Rutnagherry.

IV. Mr. Salmon states that however just such a local tax as has been proposed might be in Bengal, where there is a large class of wealthy landholders, who, as they derive their wealth from rack-renting their cultivators, might fairly be called on to contribute to their support in times of scarcity, yet in this District such a tax would be most unjust, and in fact could not be collected at the time it would be required.

The large majority of the population is agricultural; and as a famine could only result from a failure of crops, this tax would fall on the people at a time when they were least able to bear it. There is no class in this District corresponding to the zemindars of Bengal. There are Khotes, a few of whom are men of means, the large majority, however, living from hand to mouth on the yearly produce of their villages. With what justice could Government call on such men to pay such a tax? They are not even proprietors of the land they hold.

The last year of scarcity in this District was 1866, and the course pursued by the district authorities, with the sanction of Government, was to organize famine works, principally, if not wholly, roads. The absence of these was one of the causes of scarcity, as grain could not be brought to this District from the country above the Ghauts at a low enough price to enable the poor to buy it.

Since then several roads have been made, and the completion of the road system, especially the Ghaut Roads, will secure this District from a local famine, while any such calamity of a general nature will, I feel sure, call forth as hitherto both the aid of Government and the liberality of private individuals.

Sholapore.

V. Mr. Bosanquet is of opinion that it is not expedient to attempt to introduce any general measure in this part of the country with the view of checking the evil likely to result from any future famine that may arise * * * There is generally a large quantity of grain stored in the country which is available in case of one year of famine. The stores are usually accessible to persons who have money. The Collector

considers that Government, assisted by local funds, should be able to provide employment on public works for those who require it. Local contributions would assist those unable to work.

In the event of the country being visited by famine for two or three successive years, much distress would necessarily result. Rich people being few and far between, external aid would become necessary. Mr. Bosanquet cannot suggest any measures in anticipation of such a contingency.

Sattara.

VI. Mr. Arthur offers the following remarks :

I hardly believe that any one of experience in this country will fail to concur with the Commissioners in thinking that the establishment of any poor law system analogous to that which prevails in England would be most unsuited to the state of society here, whatever may be the case in a few of the larger towns where old ideas are losing their influence; the feeling is still very strong in all ordinary village communities that each member has duties to fulfil, not merely within the sphere of his own family or among his own caste people ; he feels, and is always ready to acknowledge, that he is responsible for the support of others, at least to the extent that he should help to preserve the poor from absolute want, and I believe it is only a very imperative personal necessity that would lead to the neglect of this duty.

There is then in actual operation a system far more effectual than any poor law which could be framed, however stringent its terms, and it would be nothing short of a calamity were anything substituted for it which would tend, as a poor law infallibly would, to crush out village feeling.

Recognizing this principle, the Commissioners appear to abstain from recommending anything further than that on occasion arising in certain Provinces a class of landlords, who have failed to fulfil the duties which they might justly be expected to discharge, should be legally compelled to perform them.

Without experience among the people referred to, or at least among a class in some respects similarly circumstanced, and without any accurate knowledge as to whether the obligations spoken of arise from specific agreements, or are only of a vague, undefined, implied character, easily evaded, it is impossible to form any satisfactory opinion regarding this proposal. If they are of the former description, perhaps all that can be done, unless some enactment of general application is passed, is to take such steps as may be necessary to secure the fulfilment; but if they are, on the other hand, of the latter character, there may possibly be room for inquiry whether they cannot be held to extend much further than the Commissioners have suggested, making it incumbent on those concerned not merely to assist in allaying suffering on the rare occasions on which it has assumed an aggravated form, but also to render some assistance in ordinary times in effecting improvements which are calculated to prevent

this state of things from arising. It is of course more advantageous in every way that means should be found in prosperous years for effecting local improvements which tend to render disastrous seasons more rare, than to compel a class generally exempted from all obligations to bear part of the charge on the exceptional occasions when great distress prevails.

The Commissioners have in the 70th paragraph of their report stated that their proposal does not relate to Districts in which Government holds the position of superior holder.

In this part of the country, and probably generally throughout the Bombay Presidency, Government hold this position, and I think that in the Deccan at all events, where private individuals are the superior holders, they are for the most part but little removed from the condition of the ordinary agriculturist, and would certainly not be able to pay in a time of general distress any additional taxes.

But it must be remembered that, though at such periods more could not be collected from the people, yet there is a system always in force under which they contribute largely to objects which have a tendency to lessen the expenditure which would have to be incurred were a famine to arise. Local cesses are now levied with the object of constructing roads and executing various other works which tend to avert the extremity of a famine, and, should it unhappily arise, these funds could be readily diverted from the objects on which they are now expended to such special works as are calculated to provide with employment and a livelihood the largest numbers, so that in effect the desired object is attained to quite as great an extent probably as it could be under any other system, and there is this advantage, that so much is done when the people are prosperous and able to bear the burden.

VII. Mr. Robertson is of opinion that in this Presidency when a local or partial famine may have arisen and relief become necessary, the first thing to do is to lay down the extent to which relief must be obtained, and then to rate it on the landlords, who should be divided into two classes,—

Dharwar.

1*st.*—Those holding land without any payment to Government.

2*nd.*—Government itself as the superior landlord.

Any attempt to levy from those who hold purely from Government, or from those holding on settlement sunnuds, would, the Collector adds, only give rise to well-grounded and most serious ill-feeling, besides being looked upon as a breach of faith.

VIII. There are not in this District any zemindars like those in Bengal. There are jagheerdars, but there is not, as far as Mr. Armstrong is aware, any obligation on them to support the poor on their estates

Kulladghee.

The proposition of the Famine Relief Commissioners, that on the occurrence of great scarcity the zemindars shall be bound to support by supplying food in return for labour and feeding gratuitously the helpless on their estates, could not, the Collector considers, be put in force in his Collectorate.

In case of a scarcity of food, Government should, Mr. Armstrong thinks, supply employment by means of public works, and the public might be appealed to for gratuitous relief to the helpless.

W. H. HAVELOCK,
Revenue Commissioner, S. D.

No. 2373, dated Camp Patus, the 24th November 1870.

From—J. E. OLIPHANT, Esq., Collector of Poona.

To—W. H. HAVELOCK, Esq., Revenue Commissioner, Southern Division.

I HAVE the honor to reply to your circular memorandum No. 2854 of 1870, dated 1st July.

2. I presume that the Government of India have asked for opinions only on the suggestion of the Bengal Famine Commissioners for raising, by local taxation, funds for the relief of sufferers on extraordinary occasion of famine.

3. These suggestions do not take a practical shape, except as regards the permanently settled Provinces.

In paragraph 68 the Commissioners write—"It appears to us that the time has come when, to relieve the wider poverty of extraordinary occasions, it is necessary to institute some system of local taxation by which the richer persons of each neighbourhood may be made to bear the burden of local and partial famine."

But they do not state how a system of local taxation for the poor is to be brought into practical operation, or why they consider it justifiable, except in the case of the Bengal zemindars, who are held to be under the same obligation to support the poor of their estates to which Government was under before it conferred its right of superior landlord on the zemindar.

They seem to avoid discussing the question as regards other Provinces than those under permanent settlement, on the ostensible ground that they cannot make "any recommendation of universal application, because the circumstances of different Provinces are so different, and in many the Government is still in some sense superior landlord. But by their own argument used in the case of the zemindars, wherever Government is still the superior landlord, the obligation still rests with Government to support the poor in times of famine and distress, and Government cannot justly shift that obligation upon the local inhabitants.

4. In paragraph 72 the Commissioners give the results of the arrangements they advocate. The second is this—

> "Extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population would be a charge on the land enforced by law."

If this principle is put forward by the Commissioners as worthy of application to other than the zemindars of the permanently settled Provinces of Bengal, it seems to me to be both unjust and impracticable. For how can land rendered unproductive by drought or other causes, and a rural population impoverished by famine, be justly saddled with enhanced taxation, and from what source can the payment be expected? Furthermore, on what equitable principle could the richer persons in the neighbourhood be called upon (as advocated in paragraph 68) to bear the entire burden of relieving the famine-stricken people? In all Provinces where Government is still the superior landholder, to tax the land for the relief of the rural population could have no other result than making the poor themselves at some time or other pay for their own relief, and to lay the burden of taxation for the relief of the poor on the richer inhabitants of a famine-stricken District would be to place on them the paramount obligation which attaches, in the first instance, to the landlord, *viz.*, the Government of the country.

5. I cannot, therefore, subscribe to the general conclusion arrived at by the Commissioners that the time has come to impose local taxation for the relief of extraordinary distress among the people arising from visitations of Providence. In parts of the country where there are zemindars under obligations to support their poor tenants, such obligations, if evaded, might be enforced by law. But over the greater portion of our Indian Empire Government is the great zemindar, and must needs bear the obligation it would enforce upon the Bengal superior landholders. The Government of India realizes an enormous annual revenue from the land tax and other imposts, which, if thriftly and judiciously administered with a single eye to the good of the country and its people, would suffice for all demands upon the State without having recourse in addition to a most exorbitant tax on incomes and profits, and constant demands by the Supreme Government for local taxes.

6. The Commissioners admit that "in the abstract it might be most fair that all should bear alike any visitations of Providence in any part of the empire." In that sentiment I entirely concur, and I consider that whenever the calls upon Government for the relief of extraordinary distress from famine or other causes are so heavy as to derange financial measures, a small tax should be temporarily imposed on the whole empire to relieve the temporary necessities of the State. The imposition of a light income tax, or trifling enhancement of one in operation, would be the best and fairest mode of raising the required funds, the minimum amount of income taxable being so fixed that the rural population and poorer classes should not be touched.

7. I append a report on this subject by my First Assistant, which contains some practical suggestions worthy of consideration, although I do not approve of his proposed system of relief by Government loans to the District, to be recovered by a sort of local income tax, to reach as low as cultivators paying Rupees 50 land assessment, because I cannot conceive a system more unjust, impolitic, and short-sighted than one which would cast upon the land and people of a famine-stricken District the burden of providing funds for the relief of its starving and impoverished population.

No. 273, dated the 28th July 1870.

From—A. R. Macdonald, Esq., Acting 1st Assistant Collector.

To—J. E. Oliphant, Esq., Collector of Poona.

In returning you the papers received under your No. 1319 of the 4th instant, I have the honor to submit my opinion on the subject mentioned.

2. I have never served in a District where famine prevailed to an extent in any way comparable to the case of Orissa in 1866, and that of Rajpootana during the last two years, but it cannot be doubted that great scarcity is quite possible in many parts of this Presidency, and that during Native rule what writers of the time call famines did at certain intervals occur, and it is only wise to consider beforehand how to mitigate such occurrences.

3. The Commission in paragraphs 70 and 71 indicate what might be a very proper measure in Bengal or elsewhere, where the land is in the hands of large proprietors, but even there the tax they propose is one that would fall altogether on one class, and that, too, on a class which, in a time of famine, would itself suffer very severely. If the land fails to produce its annual quota of grain, its cultivators and proprietors are the first to feel the effects, and it seems that to throw the onus of meeting the loss altogether on the land is not only short-sighted, but would fail in its object, at any rate it would fail here, and we must look to some more general and broader system of relief than simply that of an enhanced land tax.

4. The reasons of its inapplicability as a sole means for meeting an extraordinary demand may be briefly stated. The land is now held in a large majority of cases by small farmers of very limited means, and by no means peculiarly thrifty habits. The produce they raise is from year to year disposed of to the local shop-keeper, from whom they receive advances to carry on their agriculture, and in whose books they soon become very deeply involved, so that, in fact, these last become in many instances the actual owners of the land. Therefore to enhance the land tax puts an additional burden on a class which, in the time of famine, is

more dependent than ever on the usurer. The better classes of agriculturists are no doubt better able to pay a famine tax than those above described, and should do so in proportion with other classes; but their number is small.

5. Besides the land-owners, the other classes which should come within the scope of any measure to provide for a time of scarcity are merchants, artizans, and traders, and dealers of all kinds, including the petty shop-keepers, whose gains are derived principally from the land, and who benefit largely by high prices. All who are in a good position of life should be called upon to assist their poorer neighbours.

6. How to reach these persons without oppression is a question to be considered, but we will first notice the classes to be relieved:

1st.—Laborers employed during the season on cultivation, at other times elsewhere, but residents of the villages.

2nd.—Laborers who are non-residents.

3rd.—Wild tribes.

I will consider the case of the helpless indigent poor further on.

7. The first class here mentioned is the least difficult to deal with. They would either have friends better off than themselves, or could legitimately be supported at the expense of the town and village communities, or would find employment in the District. The second class comprises people who would flock from ill-favored to better-favored Districts, would, in case of famine, come in large numbers, and are generally wanderers, uncertain in number, and possessed of no means at all. The third class is one which is confined to hilly and wooded tracts; they live entirely from hand to mouth; in a time of famine the mortality amongst them would be very great, and I apprehend that this class would be the most difficult of all to relieve on account of their nomade habits and superstitions.

8. These are the classes which would require relief during a famine, and, in considering the means to be adopted to secure the end desired, we have two matters which require to be decided,—*1st*, how to raise the means, and *2ndly*, when raised, how to expend the funds.

9. In the first place a famine does not give much warning of its approach, at any rate at its commencement it is generally a mere matter of conjecture, which may be verified or falsified by a change of weather during a very short time, so that in case of its actual occurrence the means of its alleviation must be ready at hand, and promptly and energetically applied. It seems to me that this can only be done in cases where Government assistance is not gratuitously afforded by means of Government loans. The necessity once allowed, the amount required to alleviate it can be roughly estimated, and works begun, or measures for distribution of food taken. The loan can be apportioned to certain Districts, to be recovered at once, or, as would most probably be the best way, during a series of years.

10. And how to make the levy to repay such a loan. A register should be prepared in each talooka or perhaps smaller division; and as regards landed proprietors, such should be entered as pay Rupees 50 and over as land assessment to the State; those paying less are, in my opinion, persons whose circumstances in times of plenty are not such as it would be fair to consider able to bear an extra tax either during or immediately subsequent to a famine. In this register also should be entered all persons liable under the present law to income tax, and this would include every resident in a District of anything approaching easy circumstances or affluence. The amount of income of these persons has already been ascertained in most cases, and where it has not, it might be better simply to enter names at first and fill in details afterwards. This register would form the basis on which the proportion fixed for the particular District would be assessed individually or by villages. With regard to towns having municipalities, the necessary amount should be repaid by the Commissioners, who should reimburse themselves by an increase of taxation in the way most suited to their circumstances.

11. Thus in case of a famine loan having to be repaid, a certain District would be called upon for a certain amount; a list of the towns, their municipal revenues, and populations would be at hand, and a certain amount would be assessed on each; the balance to be divided throughout the villages and country generally. I believe that some plan of this kind would not be difficult to work.

12. As to the works to be carried out. It is in this country, especially at the present time, essential that the tax-payers should see that they derive some benefit from works constructed from funds supplied by an extra tax on them. Large irrigational works, which, in my opinion, are, *par excellence*, those most suitable for times of scarcity, if executed for the benefit of a few neighbouring Districts, would carry home to every tax-payer the conviction that his money was being properly laid out; for such works, plans and estimates should be ready beforehand. Smaller works of a like character executed here and there through the country would be highly popular and remunerative; and much in this way can be done to alleviate distress. If in ordinary times designs were prepared for such works to be carried out as money could be spared, then in times of scarcity an extra impulse could be given to them; and in this case it would not be necessary for Government to reimburse itself in the way above described, for the works themselves would give a good return on the amount expended on them.

13. Such is a brief sketch of one way in which in this country the exigencies of a famine could be met. Government should have power to lend sums of money to certain Districts where the necessity occurred, either from its own treasury or by means of public loans, to be repaid within a fixed time, and Government could have the power of reimbursing itself from the District where the money has been expended, either by extra assessment, by water-rates in the case of irrigational works, or

in the general manner sketched above. Where the helpless have to be supported, and work cannot be taken from them in return, food depôts must of course be opened, but care should be taken that towns should be required to support their own poor; the latter should be sent back to their native places whenever found wandering elsewhere, and the municipality should receive a loan from Government to be repaid in the manner already stated.

14. Strict measures being taken wherever possible that this class of indigent people should be supported by their own townspeople, it would hardly ever happen that they would crowd into other places and become fruitful sources of disease and mortality. The District officers would at once organise measures for their relief, either by private charity or at public stores, opened by the Municipal Commissioners. In other towns and *large villages*, say with 500 inhabitants and upwards, not having municipal institutions, Government should have authority to introduce such institutions temporarily by notice, and impose the taxation most suitable to the place and time, advancing loans to the inhabitants to meet the immediate necessities of the case, and to prevent the municipal taxation being too burdensome at first, and afterwards reimbursing itself by annual payments. At each such place the helpless and needy of the surrounding villages can be collected, and relieved without difficulty, these persons paying some proportion of the amount expended.

15. In paragraph 65 of their report the Famine Commissioners refer to the Native habit of supporting their poor, and deprecate any general poor law; but I think that of late it has become evident that the more India has advanced in its system of Government towards a Western type, the more have the people looked to the new institutions and new funds to provide for emergencies, as, for instance, when works of local improvements have to be carried out, private subscriptions come in to aid grants from general funds; and so convinced am I of this, and of the necessity that nothing in a famine crisis should be left to chance, or to the innate benevolent disposition of the people, that, call it by what name you may, some general law is essential to strengthen the hands of Government when a great emergency arises. It need not be necessary to supersede private charity, but it is necessary that where it does not exist, or where it is not spontaneous, Government should be prepared to act. All large towns now are provided with municipal institutions, and through these, and the temporary ones advocated by me, the people's wants can be met by the people themselves.

16. In conclusion, to sum up, I would advocate—

(1.) The passing of a general law empowering Government to take action.

(2.) The advance of loans by Government.

(3.) The repayment of these loans, except in the case of remunerative irrigational works, in the course of a term of years, by a general tax as described.

(4.) The management of the funds thus supplied by committees composed of Government officers, European and Native, and the chief people of the Districts.

(5.) The expenditure of the money on public works and food depôts for the helpless indigent poor.

(6.) That the works carried on should wherever possible be irrigational.

(7.) That the helpless indigent poor should be supported in the places where they have last resided for a year or more, and when found wandering elsewhere should be sent back there.

No. 1705, dated Camp mouth of the Gaj, the 22nd December 1870.

From—Colonel Sir W. L. Merewether, K. C. S. I. & C. B., Commissioner in Sind.

To—His Excellency the Right Hon'ble Sir W. R. Seymour V. Fitzgerald, G. C. S. I., Governor and President in Council, Bombay.

As called for in Government Resolution No. 1521, dated 28th June last, I have the honor to submit a summary of the views of the District Officers in Sind on the subject of making provision for future famines.

2. In Sind the nature of the country and manner of cultivation are such that, provided irrigational measures are properly attended to, and facility of communication duly regarded, it is scarcely possible that there ever should be a famine.

3. There being, therefore, no necessity for any local provision against famine in this Province, it only remains for me to give my opinion on the subject as it affects India generally.

4. I consider it would be very injudicious to attempt relief by increased taxation in that part of the country which was afflicted by famine. It could only be levied from the well-to-do, and would in that way infallibly interfere with private and spontaneous charity, as the taxed would say they were already contributors and more could not be expected of them.

5. To set aside money in a country where famine cannot occur, and where it would never have to be expended, as recommended by the Collectors of Shikarpore and Kurrachee, would be merely locking up capital, which would be otherwise utilized within and for the good of that country, and would impede progress.

6. To my mind the subject is purely an imperial one, falling on the Imperial Government as the landlord of the country; and that in all cases, excepting the one noted below, provision should be made from the imperial revenues. The Government should be prepared to set apart funds for this purpose, and they should be devoted to assist private charity in affording relief to the sick and helpless. Aid to the robust people able to work can always be given with advantage by expenditure on remunerative works within the District where famine exists. Thus Government gets a good return for the money laid out, and the particular country is benefited by improvements which will enable the people to more easily recover themselves after the evil time has passed.

7. To provide for the sick and helpless when payment unfortunately occurs in any part of India, committees should be formed at all Presidency and large Towns to collect contributions from the charitable, remitting the amounts so received to the part of the country where required, and where they would be disposed of to the best advantage, with whatever sums the Imperial Government found it necessary to supplement them with. This, it appears to me, assimilates somewhat to the course adopted at home when any dire distress prevails in any part of the kingdom for which existing rates do not suffice, and the charity being disbursed by local authorities ensures its being systematized and applied in the most beneficial way.

8. The exception alluded to is when there is a permanent settlement. Then it is clearly the duty of the landholders, who are the real landlords, and who benefit by undisturbed possession, to help the poor and suffering around them; and as it seems that such a course is not always followed, it might be made compulsory by legal enactment. The Government of India having accepted the responsibility as landlord, mentioned above in the 6th paragraph, those holding lands under a permanency could not gainsay the justice of the rule.

Summary of the Reports of the District Officers in Sind on the subject of provision for future famines by direct taxation, by COLONEL M. W. L. MEREWETHER, *Commissioner in Sind.*

Collector of Kurrachee states that Sind has never under British rule suffered from any famine; that the high prices of late years have been caused by large exports to other places; that if such calamity ever overtakes the people, it would be difficult to raise sufficient funds by additional taxation on holders of land; that as the circumstances of the landholders in Sind differ altogether from those of the zemindars of Bengal, Government as a superior landlord should provide employment for the able-bodied and subsistence for the helpless. As long, however, as Government make due provision for the construction and maintenance of irrigational canals, there need be no fear of famine. If funds should at any time be required, suggests that a certain sum for each District be set apart year by year from the moiety of the local funds Government has a right to take under Section 6 of the Bombay Act

VIII. of 1865, and invest in Government securities, the interest being paid to local funds; that when these yearly payments reach a certain aggregate sum, deductions should cease; that the sum thus collected should, in conjunction with private contributions, and aid from local funds, and the public exchequer when necessary, be made use of for relief in cases of famine. Deprecates any enhancement of local taxation, except such as might follow on increase of land revenue upon revision of settlement.

Collector of Hydrabad states that in Sind actual famine is unknown, and even severe scarcity very rare. The distress in 1869-70, which was unprecedented, was owing to large exports of grain having been made to other places. Extraordinary measures do not, therefore, seem called for in Sind; that he called on Captain Boulton, his Deputy, for his opinion, and that they are both agreed—

1st, that, should a famine ever occur money might be raised as a charge on the land, but that it should be spent on famine works of public improvement and not distributed in private relief;

2nd, that they both deprecate the idea of taxing the District wherein the distress has happened, preferring the plan of assessing the famine rate on those fortunate parts of the country which may have escaped the fatality, and applying the money to the relief of the sufferers.

Collector of Shikarpore states that any measure of additional taxation would be most unpopular, as it would be difficult to reconcile the people to present payment to provide for a prospective contingency. In Sind nothing need be feared beyond a season of scarcity. Proposes to set aside one-sixteenth of the local cesses every year for the relief of distress in time of scarcity, and to make a fund which will increase every year, till in sixteen years a sum equal to one year's income would be available for expenditure, and that the allotment might be discontinued after a certain sum has accumulated.

Political Superintendent, Upper Sind Frontier, states that as the zemindaree system under the existing settlement is in its infancy, it would not be advisable to compel the zemindars by law to provide for the rural population on the occurrence of any famine. That many of the richer zemindars would probably do so spontaneously. The majority of them, however, are not rich, and are in debt. Is of opinion that no immediate legislation is necessary, but that it will be sufficient, in the event of the occurrence of any famine, if the Political Superintendent is ordered to do his best for the sufferers, partly by obtaining contributions from the richer zemindars, and partly by public works and by appeal to the public.

Political Superintendent, Thurr and Parkur, is of opinion that in all cases of famine Government should alone provide funds for subsistence

and employment of famine-stricken people ; that it is not advisable to levy any separate tax when famine exists, or is impending, as in this country every one is affected by it, but that Government might enhance any existing tax, if thought proper, which would fall on the richer classes.

No. 436, dated Fort William, the 2nd February 1871.

From—R. THOMPSON, ESQ., Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal in the Revenue Department.

To—A. O. HUME, ESQ., C. B., Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India, Home Dept.

I AM directed to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Secretary Bayley's letter No. 2790, dated 7th June last, in which the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor was drawn to the suggestions contained in paragraphs 63 to 70 of the report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, in regard to the question of raising, by a system of local taxation, the funds required on such extraordinary occasions to afford relief to the sufferers.

2. The questions involved in the Commissioners' suggestions are represented in Mr. Bayley's letter as "of extreme importance," and as "surrounded by difficulties of considerable magnitude, affecting a variety of interests, and requiring the solution of some administrative problems of very great moment;" and the letter urges the necessity "of enquiring how far these difficulties are practically insurmountable." Having regard to the importance attached to the subject, and the character of the propositions which the Commissioners make, the Lieutenant-Governor thought it desirable to consult several of the officers of this Government on the subject; and, as requested in the 4th paragraph of the letter under acknowledgment, I am desired to forward a copy of the opinions given by the officers consulted.

3. Though there is some little obscurity in the expressions made use of by the Famine Commissioners, the following may be accepted as the propositions which they put forward: *first*, that in times of extraordinary want affecting large classes of the rural population, the obligation which

the zemindars in permanently-settled Districts accepted with that settlement of maintaining the poor, should be enforced by law, and that local taxation for the relief of the famine-stricken should take the shape of charge on zemindary rights; *secondly*, that provision should be made to enable the zemindars to recover, from all persons holding a permanent transferable interest at a fixed rate between themselves and the ryots, a share of the rate assessed in proportion to their respective shares in the profit of the land; and *thirdly*, that to avoid a too great pressure upon the zemindars in a year of scarcity, the Government should be empowered to advance money to them to be recovered as an arrear of land revenue by a rate spread over several years.

4. The reference which the Government of India has made upon these proposals involves, in the Lieutenant-Governor's view, two important considerations,—*first*, whether the Commissioners' recommendations are in themselves fair and equitable; and *secondly*, if they are so, in what manner they can best be carried out. Upon a careful consideration of the reports submitted by the officers who have been consulted, the Lieutenant-Governor does not hesitate to accept the opinions expressed by a large majority of those who have referred to the point, that any such principle of action as that contained in the Commissioners' report would be an injustice to the landed proprietors in the Lower Provinces. With respect to this point, indeed, and adverting to the circumstance that the report of the Commissioners bears Mr. Dampier's signature, the Lieutenant-Governor must say that he is at a loss to understand how any one acquainted with the state of things in these Provinces could have committed himself to the statement contained in paragraph 69 of the report, that "the obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government."

5. It is impossible, so far as the Lieutenant-Governor is aware, to discover the source from which this statement was derived, and the opinion that it cannot be substantiated is common to all the officers whose attention has been drawn to the object. Apart from this, it has been rightly pointed

out by the Commissioner of Cooch Behar that the mere assertion of the obligation by Government officers, and the absence of its repudiation by the organs of the zemindars, even if in themselves true, would not afford sufficient warrant for the statement that under the permanent settlement zemindars are obliged to support the poor on their estates, that obligation having been by the settlement transferred to them by the State. Clearly it is to the law that we must turn for the verification of such a statement; and if in the laws of 1793, which embody the rights and responsibilities of zemindars, no foundation can be found for the statement, the procedure proposed to be founded on it must be unreservedly rejected for this country, without respect to the analogies which the Famine Commissioners and the Officiating Commissioner of Chittagong refer to as regards the provision made on similar occasions in England and Ireland.

6. Regarding then the case in its legal aspect, the Governor General in Council will not fail to perceive that, in the reports which have been received from officers who have had long practical experience in the administration of these Provinces, the argument of the Commissioners, which is based on the terms of the permanent settlement of Bengal, is almost unanimously opposed as arbitrary and unreal. In paragraphs 5 to 9 of the letter from Mr. V. H. Schalch, the senior Member of the Board of Revenue (which are too long to admit of quotation), the opinion is very distinctly enforced that "the terms of the permanent settlement cannot be held to impose on the land-holders any such obligation as that which the Famine Commissioners take for granted, *viz.*, the obligation of the zemindars to support the poor of their estates." Mr. A. Money, the second Member of the Board, takes practically the same view, which is also held by four Commissioners of Divisions, the Legal Remembrancer, and the Secretary to the Board of Revenue; and the position so accepted receives, in the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion, still greater weight from the fact that in a recent despatch from the Secretary of State in a cognate matter, it was laid down that the Article of Regulation I., 1793, to which alone reference can be made for the authority which is now claimed, could not possibly be construed as

reserving a power large enough to enforce the obligation contended for.

7. Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that "the obligation is, in fact, one which attached to the Government, while the Government was the great land-holder of the country, but which has been transferred (in some degree) with its correlative rights to the zemindars," it is contended by some in the recent correspondence that, under any circumstances, the obligation transferred could extend only, as far as the interests of the Government in the land were transferred, to the zemindars; and that if, as was the case under the permanent settlement ten-elevenths of the rent of the lands settled in perpetuity were appropriated by Government, the supposed transfer of the entire obligation to the zemindars of maintaining their poor would have been a very inequitable measure. Against this it may be rightly urged that if the law is on the side of Government seeking to enforce this obligation, the zemindars cannot now put forward the plea of having made a bad bargain, and repudiate the responsibilities which attached to their position as landholders, specially since large estates with vast capabilities of improvement were transferred to the zemindars on a fixed rental at the time of the permanent settlement. But it appears to the Lieutenant-Governor that such a contention would only be fair on the assumption that the laws of 1793 imposed on zemindars the liability which the Commissioners propose to enforce, and this, in the Lieutenant-Governor's opinion, is an untenable assumption. It must also be borne in mind that the Commissioners' proposals have reference only to zemindars in permanently settled Districts, and to them on the ground that "the time has come when, to relieve not ordinary poverty but the wider poverty of extraordinary occasions, it is necessary to institute some system of local taxation by which the *richer persons of* each neighbourhood * * * * * may be made to bear the burden of local and partial famine." The fact, however, is that the zemindars of the permanently settled Districts, with a very few exceptions, are not rich men; and in this view the proposition to impose, upon them solely, such a tax as that which is now under consideration, to the exemption of the general community from such charges, would be open to all the

objections to exclusive taxation on a special class not fairly liable to it.

8. In support of this view it may be noticed that in the long discussions which have lately taken place, much consideration has been given to the existing conditions of landed property in Bengal, and it has been shown that since 1793 the large and at present increasing creation of under-tenures in permanency throughout Bengal has resulted in leaving many proprietors of estates in the position of simple annuitants. The zemindars can exercise no control in the matter of these under-tenures; and in them, subject to the payment of the rent determined upon at the time of their creation, the holders are as absolutely proprietors with all rights of transfer, sale, and inheritance, as the original owners with whom the estates were settled. It may be well also to point out that the existence of such subinfeudation has been completely recognized by the acts of Government and the legislation which has been adopted to give it validity. Under such circumstances it is a fair point of enquiry whether the alleged transfer of obligation from the Government to the zemindars, on which the Commissioners rely for the establishment of their case, is not equally binding as regards the subsequent transfers sanctioned by the laws and recognized in the administration of the country. Upon this point Mr. McNeile has made the following pertinent observations:

The Commissioners say that the obligation to maintain the destitute classes of the community is 'one which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country, but which has been transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindars.' Government then, according to the Commissioners, is no longer land-holder, and the obligation alluded to no longer rests upon it. But if so, it requires little exposition to show that the majority of the zemindars in Bengal are now no longer land-holders, and that the obligation is lifted off their shoulders also. Precisely a similar transfer of rights and obligations to that effected by Government through the permanent settlement has been since effected throughout by far the greater part of Bengal by the zemindars through the lease of their estates in putnee tenure. The position of the putneedar relatively to that of the zemindar—a position which has long since been recognized and confirmed by positive enactment—is identical in all essential points with the zemindar's position in his relation to Government. So, if Government should

off its obligation to support the poor in 1793, the zemindars have since done the same thing. And the process has not stopped here. The putneedars have in a precisely similar way transferred in a thousand cases their rights and obligations to darputneedars, and they again very frequently to seputneedars. And further observation brings to light a host of other permanent under-tenants, gantidars, howladars, and the like, the non-liability of whose tenures to any increase of assessment at the hands of the next superior land-holder relieves the latter, on the principle adopted by the Commissioners, of the obligation which would otherwise devolve upon him. The Commissioners' principle then appears to yield this practical result, that the obligation to maintain the rural poor now devolves upon the lowest grade of sub-tenants, who hold permanent interests in land at invariable rates, and on that grade only—a result which, as it seems to me, has only to be stated to ensure the rejection of the theory which leads to it.

9. So far the reference has been considered as a question of law and of justice, and it appears to the Lieutenant-Governor to be conclusively established that there is nothing in the regulations confirming the permanent settlement, or in the actual conditions by which that settlement was attended, from which the Commissioners' views can receive any support. As a matter of expediency to which resort may be made in case of necessity, the Governor General in Council will find in the reports received how strongly the proposition of such a measure is generally condemned. It is objected to, in the *first* place, as a system which would impose upon a single class a burden to which they are not alone liable; *secondly*, it would throw upon zemindars the obligation of supporting people with whom in their business relations they have no sort of connection; and *thirdly*, by localizing the contributions for relief and laying upon owners of land a special tax in a time of sore distress consequent on the failure of the crops, it would exact a duty which, from the very circumstances of the case, would be impracticable of fulfilment in a season of general calamity. In addition to these objections, I am desired to suggest the absence of any necessity for such a measure. The proposals of the Commissioners admittedly refer to the permanently settled Districts only, and the Lieutenant-Governor has been unable to discover that within the permanently settled Districts of Bengal the Government has, ever since the commencement of its rule in the country, except partially in

1866, been called upon to meet the exigencies of an extraordinary calamity from famine or other cause.

10. It may be observed, in conclusion, that whenever the question of something in the form of a poor law does arise, it will, accepting even the Commissioners' mode of procedure, necessarily involve all the same difficulties which the Government is now striving to overcome in respect to legislation for a local cess for roads. It has yet to be seen whether those difficulties are capable of a satisfactory solution; but, however that may prove, the Lieutenant-Governor is convinced that a special tax upon the zemindars alone, for the object which the Commissioners recommend, whether in permanent or temporarily settled estates, is unfair in principle, and that it would be so unjust under the existing conditions of landed property in Bengal that it could never be entertained by any one fully acquainted with those conditions.

Dated the 5th July 1870.

From—D. J. McNeile, Esq., Offg. Secy. to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces.

To—The Offg. Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

I have the honor to submit the following observations in reply to Government orders No. 2454 of the 22nd ultimo.

Two questions are propounded for consideration,—*first*, are the proposals made by the Famine Commissioners for the purpose of raising funds to relieve rural distress within the permanently settled Provinces of Lower Bengal fair and just? *second*, if they are so, how can effect be best given to them?

I do not consider the Commissioners' proposals fair and just. The ground on which they are based is stated in the latter part of their 69th paragraph. They there observe—"The obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government." This is a very bold statement, and one which, I venture to say, the Commissioners would find it very difficult to substantiate. I may only be revealing my own ignorance of official records in questioning its accuracy, but I have read a good deal that has been written on the subject of the settlement of Bengal, and yet do not recollect having ever heard of the view alluded to until I read the Commissioners' report. Surely if this unanimous concurrence on so important a subject were, indeed, to be found in official records, some traces

of it would appear in the public correspondence which led to the establishment of the system under which this so clearly recognised obligation obtains. But I look in vain for it in the minutes and despatches of 1790 to 1793 in Lord Cornwallis' proclamation to the landholders, and in the regulations subsequently enacted to give effect to that proclamation.

But in point of fact, does any such obligation now exist, and on what exact class of persons does it rest? The permanent settlement was made with "the zemindars, independent talookdars, and other actual proprietors of land." The Government pledged itself never to demand from those persons with whom it was then in direct account as landlord a higher rent for the estates settled with them respectively than had been just assessed upon them. Now the Commissioners say that the obligation to maintain the destitute classes of the community is "one which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country, but which has been transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindars." Government, then, according to the Commissioners, is no longer landholder, and the obligation alluded to no longer rests upon it. But if so, it requires little exposition to shew that the majority of the zemindars in Bengal are now no longer landholders, and that the obligation is lifted off their shoulders also. Precisely a similar transfer of rights and obligations to that effected by Government through the permanent settlement has been since effected throughout by far the greater part of Bengal by the zemindars through the lease of their estates in putnee tenure. The position of the putneedar relatively to that of the zemindar—a position which has long since been recognised and confirmed by positive enactment—is identical in all essential points with the zemindar's position in his relation to Government. So if Government shook off its obligation to support the poor in 1793, the zemindars have since done the same thing. And the process has not stopped here. The putneedars have in a precisely similar way transferred in a thousand cases their rights and obligations to darputneedars, and they again very frequently to seputneedars; and further observation brings to light a host of other permanent under-tenants, gantidars, howladars, and the like, the non-liability of whose tenures to any increase of assessment at the hands of the next superior landholder relieves the latter, on the principle adopted by the Commissioners, of the obligation which would otherwise devolve upon him. The Commissioners' principle, then, appears to yield this practical result, that the obligation to maintain the rural poor now devolves upon the lowest grade of sub-tenants, who hold permanent interests in land at invariable rates, and on that grade only—a result which, as it seems to me, has only to be stated to ensure the rejection of the theory which leads to it.

The Commissioners do not, indeed, thus work out their theory. They would distribute the burden over all the holders of permanent interests in the land,—from the zemindars downwards,—it is to be

presumed proportionally to the several values of those interests. But if so, why is the Government excluded at one end of the scale of liability, and the holders of temporary interests, as well as the whole mass of the cultivators of the soil, at the other? The Commissioners, it is true, propose in their 71st paragraph that Government shall come to the rescue when all subordinate sources of relief prove inadequate; but they clearly point to such action as to be taken by Government in its character of trustee of the public welfare, and not of permanent landlord. The very basis of their whole position is, as already remarked, that Government is no longer landlord; and they stand to that position in the paragraph just alluded to by quoting the analogy of grants made from the public exchequer in England, where Government is certainly not landlord. Then with reference to the holders of temporary interests, why should a farmer of a rich estate, with at twenty years' lease, affording him abundant opportunity for investment of capital in agricultural improvements, for reclamation of waste land, and for other modes of raising the rental of his farm, and thus pocketing a handsome share of the gross profits of the land, be excluded from the incidence of a burden which falls on the neighbouring putneedar, who, perhaps, is a far less substantial person, and who may be precluded, by the creation of a permanent under-tenure, from all chance, present or future, of enhancing his income from land? Why should the cultivator himself, whose holding is sufficiently profitable to yield him an income which suffices for more than the necessaries of life, be excused his proper share of the public burden? The truth is, that if a tax is to be laid on the land, every class which derives any direct profit from land must contribute its just quota to it.

But why must a tax be laid on the land? The Commissioners assign no reason for their proposal, except the alleged traditional obligation on the part of the landlord to support the poor on his domain. They do not attempt to defend it on grounds of general equity. And I think it would be inequitable to exempt the commercial classes, which as a whole constitute the richest section of the community, from the duty of helping to meet the emergency of such a general calamity as a threatened famine—an emergency the immediate tendency of which is to fill their pockets. I am convinced that a tax, specially imposed on land, whether for imperial or local purposes, provided the owners and cultivators of land are not the only class to be benefited by the application of the funds raised, is an unfair one, whether the land is permanently settled or not. A general tax on all property over and above that which is consumed in the form of the necessaries of life is the only one which is in theory unobjectionable, and it is too soon to say that, because we have hitherto failed to effect an equitable assessment of such a tax, the task is an impossible one. In conclusion, it is only necessary for me to add that, believing the Commissioners' proposal to be unfair and unwise, I am not called upon by the Government order under reply to offer any suggestions as to the best method of giving effect to them.

Dated the 6th July 1870.

From—A. MONEY, ESQ., C. B., Junior Member of the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces.

To—The Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

I HAVE the honor to submit, as desired, my opinion on the questions raised in the letter from the Government of India, No. 2790 of the 7th ultimo.

The object aimed at is the imposition of a local poor-rate in times of exceptional distress.

This reverses the principle on which the poor-rate in England is based, namely, the support of the habitual poor.

I quite admit, however, that if there exists an obligation on zemindars such as is mentioned at the end of paragraph 69 of the famine report, the fact that this obligation is not enforced in ordinary times is no reason for not availing ourselves of it when the need becomes great.

The whole question seems to me to resolve itself into this. Does such an obligation exist? A tax cannot be levied on one interest or class only, except an obligation, recognized or implied, exist; or unless it be shewn that the benefits derived devolves entirely, or almost entirely, upon that class.

The Famine Commissioners allow that no mention of an obligation on zemindars to support the poor in their zemindaries is to be found in any law, but urge that it has always been asserted by the officers of Government, is not denied by the organs of the zemindars, is an obligation which attached to the Government while the Government was landlord, and an obligation which was transferred with its correlative right to the zemindars.

If the last part of this portion is proved, it is unnecessary to discuss the first.

On looking at the action of Government in cases of famines occurring before the perpetual settlement, I am driven to the conclusion that if the obligation specified rested then upon the Government, it was an obligation very badly and insufficiently fulfilled. In the great famine of 1869-70, the remission of the land tax which was granted was only a remission of £65,000 out of a demand of £1,380,000; and this was counterbalanced by an increase of 10 per cent. on the land tax of the succeeding year.

It must be borne in mind also that the remission was not an act of grace but of simple necessity.

As an act of grace, as anything which might be called the recognition of an obligation, a grant of £9,000 is all I can find.—(*See* Mr. Hunter's Annals of Rural Bengal, pages 21 to 41.)

It may be urged that the remark of the Famine Commissioners as to the obligation of Government relates to a time anterior to British

occupation, the proprietary rights of zemindars having an existence which dates prior to that period; if so, I would answer that those rights were not practically recognized at the time I speak of; for, in 1772, the lands of the Kishnaghur District were put up to public auction on a settlement of five years, this settlement forming "the model of the settlement of the whole Province;" while in other Districts the settlements were only made with the hereditary possessors, when their offers were more advantageous than those of outsiders.—(*See* Warren Hastings' letter to Court of Directors, Appendix A of Mr. Hunter's book.)

The facts above stated show that at the time of the greatest famine which has visited India since it was under British rule, the Government considered itself practically the landholder of the country and, as such, recognized no obligation whatever to assist adequately its suffering and starving ryots.

It cannot then, I think, be urged that "the obligation has been transferred to the zemindars."

But if it could, it would certainly follow that the obligation has been transferred only to the extent to which the interests of Government in the land have been transferred.

As Bengal was settled on the principle of ten-elevenths of the rent being paid to Government, the obligation transferred to the zemindar could only represent one-eleventh of the entire obligation, the rest still remaining with the Government.

On the ground put forward by the Famine Commissioners at the end of their 69th paragraph, the existence of an obligation on zemindars to support the agricultural poor is clearly not made out. Both this, and the other grounds on which the argument rests, appear to me to be pure assumptions.

I am aware of nothing which could authorize the statement that "the obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government." The Commissioners have confounded two things essentially distinct,—an obligation and a duty. What a man ought to do, is not necessarily what he is bound to do. There are relations between men, such as the relations between employer and employed, receiver and giver, master and servant, which imply, to a certain extent, a mutual dependence, and give a limited claim, though no right, to mutual assistance. Thus, in cases of sickness a good master helps his servant; in cases of temporary slackness of demand, a humane manufacturer continues the wages of his workmen; and when prices are high, a benevolent landlord will not exact all he is entitled to.

This is the kind of claim to which officers of Government have adverted when writing of what zemindars ought to do, or fail to do, in times of distress; but it is a perversion of words to twist the proclaiming of a moral duty into the recognition of a legal obligation.

The claim of the ryot on his zemindar is precisely that of the Lancashire weaver on the cotton manufacturer; that is, it is a claim on charity, and it is evident that in even this sense it is a very limited claim, for the same blow strikes the master and the man; the suffering is on both sides, and the absence of grain or cotton which starves the ryot or the weaver deprives the zemindar of his rents and the manufacturer of his profits.

There is another consideration. The extent to which a claim of the kind referred to may exist, will be in proportion to the dependence of the one class upon the other. Thus, the moral obligation to support a slave is much stronger than the same obligation to support a servant. The reason is obvious. The relation in the latter case is one of contract, and under a contract neither side has a right to go beyond its express terms. If this position be correct, the Famine Commissioners themselves have proved that the moral obligation on zemindars is becoming weaker every year, and that consequently arguments drawn from a previously existing state of things are beside the question. If it be true that "under the purely Native system almost every man is more or less a farmer, on the immediate personal dependent of a farmer," and that "all our commerce and our enterprise, our great works and improved systems, create or increase the class depending on regular wages" (paragraph 63), it is obvious that dependence, the basis of the moral obligation, is a gradually narrowing basis. But the Commissioners might have gone further in the same direction. All our laws, especially the rent-laws, have tended to break up the old ties between zemindar and ryot. We have made the latter a freer man; we have secured for him, if not given him, rights previously uncertain; we have done our best to provide for him a separate standing ground; and, so far as we have succeeded, we have destroyed the dependence of the ryot on the zemindar, and with it the foundation of any claim he possessed for support in times of distress.

The position taken by the Famine Commissioners, and the reasons brought in support of it, appear to me to be essentially weak and illogical.

As regards the abstract merits of the question, I think the proposal quite untenable.

The ryot's starvation is the landholder's ruin. Hitherto the system has been to give relief to the landholder, on the understanding that he will give similar relief to his ryots. In this form, as in the form of direct famine relief, it is the public who pays; and this seems to me the correct principle. It is merely a recognition of the mutual interdependence of all classes and interests in a country upon each other.

Roads, railways, telegraphs, improvements in currency, all tend to the same result; they mitigate local distress by extending the area of its operation. Thus, a famine at Delhi raises the price of grain in Chittagong, because easy communication exists between the two places.

The increased price the Chittagong ryot pays for his rice is the contribution to the relief of the distressed up-country man. Those who are well off should, and naturally do, assist those who are suffering. The proposal of the Famine Commissioners is to make one class of sufferers pay for another; the result would be increased difficulty in the return of prosperity to a tract visited by famine; in other words, aggravation of the evils it is sought to guard against.

Dated the —— July 1870.

From—V. H. Schalch, Esq., Member of the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces.

To—The Officiating Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

I have the honor to reply to your letter of the 22nd ultimo.

2. As regards the first main question which the proposals made by the Famine Commission would appear, as stated in the letter of the Government of Bengal to involve, their fairness and justice seem to depend on two considerations: 1*st*, are they just towards the persons who are to be brought under a system of local taxation? and, 2*nd*, the justice of the measures being accepted, is their adoption expedient and likely to result good?

3. It will be observed that the proposed taxation is intended to take the shape of a charge on all zemindaree rights, that is on land alone, leaving free from its incidence all other kinds of property.

4. Now land is held under two general systems, that is, 1*st*, it is held under a permanent settlement, subject to no subsequent enhancement of revenue; and, 2*nd*, under a settlement for a limited period, on the expiration of which the Government demand admits of increase.

5. Of the permanent settlement, Regulation I. of 1793 may be taken as the charter and basis, and we must take it for our guide when desirous of ascertaining the conditions on which it was granted, the rights it has conferred, and the corresponding duties it imposes. It conveys the land to the zemindar at an assessment fixed for ever; and while expression is given to a trust that the zemindars will exert themselves in the cultivation of their lands on the receipt of such a boon, it declares the duties required of them to be "the regular discharge of the revenue, notwithstanding any drought, inundation, or other calamity of season, and the exercise of good faith and moderation towards dependent talookdars and ryots." At the same time the right is distinctly reserved to legislate for the protection and welfare of these latter classes.

6. This reservation clearly relates to the protection and welfare of these classes in their relation to their landlords in the matter of rents

and such like. In fact, the Secretary of State has held in a recent despatch "that the whole context indicates that the power intended to be reserved was the power of regulating and limiting the power of zemindars over their tenantry. It cannot be tortured into an interpretation which would include their material and personal improvement by means of construction of roads, the spread of education, and by affording them means of support in seasons of famine

7. It is also to be remembered that the original assessment was made on the supposition that ten-elevenths of the gross rental of the estates were to be absorbed in the Government demand for revenue, the zemindars receiving but one-eleventh for their proprietary rights in the estate. Had this proportion continued to exist, the zemindars could scarce have borne the burden of the calamities of season which the settlement threw on them; but possibly it was hoped by such a stipulation to drive them to enforce the cultivation of the waste lands which at the time abounded in all estates, and the rental of which would be so much clear gain to the proprietors.

8. If, however, it had been intended to impose on them the obligation of supporting the tenantry in times of extreme famine, or even of unusual pressure, such an obligation would surely have been distinctly specified, as was done in the case of loss of rental arising from calamities of season.

9. Bound as the zemindars are to treat their talookdars and ryots with moderation and good faith, they might be held under an obligation, in seasons of famine, to take their condition into consideration when levying their rent; even possibly to the extent of remitting all rent when the ryots might be unable from such circumstances to meet the zemindar's demands; but beyond this the terms of the permanent settlement cannot be held to impose on the landholders any such obligation as that which the Famine Commission take for granted the "obligation of the zemindars to support the poor of their estates."

10. If this be a correct view of the responsibility in this respect of proprietors of estates permanently settled, the obligation can, *á fortiori*, be with even less justice imposed on the proprietor of estates temporarily settled, in which the beneficial interests are far less valuable than in estates permanently settled.

11. Admitting even, which I do not, that there rests on the landholders an obligation to support their own tenantry, it is to be remarked that the first burst of a famine falls not upon the agricultural, but on the industrial classes, and that it is for their aid and support that the greater portion of expense has to be incurred. For the maintenance of this class in times of famine, the landholders cannot be in any point of view held more especially responsible than is the

remainder of the general community; and therefore to confine, as is proposed, the incidence of local taxation for the relief of the sufferers in famine to the landholding class would clearly be unjust.

12. The expediency of such a system of taxation, admitting, or setting aside the question of its justice, has to be considered.

13. Here I regret to find myself opposed to the recommendations of the Commission.

14. They allow that, as Native society is now constituted, the agricultural classes have a peculiar capacity of withstanding for a certain period, and up to a certain degree, calamities of season. They would, therefore, not interfere " so long as the social policy which dictates the sacrifices enabling the Natives to support one another, may suffice, hard as the system may appear to the poor." They allow that this feeling exists up to the point " when calamity either reduces whole families or classes to starvation, or brings them so low that, on the principle of two on a plank, some must inevitably be sacrificed.

15. The result, therefore, would be that just at the moment when the resources of the people and their means of self-support are reduced to a minimum, Government comes in and imposes a local taxation on a population utterly unable to bear any additional pressure; the additional strain breaks the back of their capacity of resistance, and the last stage of extreme famine is prematurely brought on, in which the burthen for relief is thrown upon the general revenue of the country.

16. It may be said that this would not be the result, because the taxation would fall only upon the wealthy landholders, and not upon the suffering classes of the subordinate tenantry.

17. If the land were held by large proprietors this might be true, and, unfortunately, an impression seems to be general, that as regards Bengal at least such is the case; but this impression is totally erroneous.

18. Owing to the system of sub-infeudation, which has long prevailed in Bengal, and which is still in process of extension, the proprietary interest in land descends in a lengthening chain from the zemindar or recorded proprietor, down to the thannee ryot or cultivator, holding at a fixed rate; and the proprietary rights are shared by a long line of tenants of various descriptions, so that many of the recorded proprietors, and even of those holding direct from them, are but mere annuitants on the land.

19. The Commission seem to be in some degree aware of this fact for when they propose that the taxation should take the shape of a charge on zemindaree rights, they would "provide that the zemindar should be entitled to recover from all persons, holding a permanent

transferable interest at a fixed rent intermediate between himself and the ryot, a share of the rate assessed proportionate to their respective shares in the profits of the land."

20. What would be the practical working of such a scheme?

21. The tax collector would come down upon the recorded proprietor; the latter would have to meet the demand at a time when he himself is pressed for the means of supporting his immediate relations and numerous dependants. This he would in rare cases be able to do without assistance from the mahajans at usurious rates. He must then endeavour to reimburse himself from those holding immediately subordinate to him, by whom the same difficulty would be felt as he himself experiences, and would be felt in a degree of severity geometrically progressive as it extends down the lengthening chain of the poorer and inferior tenantry. The greater mass could not meet the demand, and when it was enforced, even in part, they would be deprived of all prospect of resisting and tiding over the existing pressure until the calamity had passed.

22. Practically, then, the imposition of a famine cess at a time of extraordinary poverty and want, so far from causing general relief, would but tend to aggravate the calamity and reduce all classes to a dead level of want and distress, while the anticipation of the imposition of the burden would dry up the sources of private charity in the earlier stages of distress, for each man, with the fear of such demand before his eyes, would reserve his means and close his pocket, and thus the liberality of which the early exercise might have successfully met a temporary distress, would be arrested, and the passing calamity be extended into an ever-increasing and wide-spread famine.

23. Or, suppose that Government comes forward, as suggested, to help the landlords by an advance to be recovered as land revenue by a rate spread over several years, what chance would there be of the recovery of the country oppressed by so heavy a debt?

24. Take Orissa, the famine in which has given rise to the Commission's proposals.

25. There the Government came liberally forward to meet the crisis of fearful calamity that had occurred by remission of revenue and by offering the means of subsistence to the able-bodied by labor on public works, and to the weak and incapable by the distribution of food.

26. The result has been that within four years the country has so recovered itself that the effect of its late utter prostration is scarcely to be seen.

27. Had the course now suggested been followed, far different would have been the result.

28. There being no large landholders in the Province, the imposition of a local tax would at once have deprived large masses of all means of self-support; large loans must have undoubtedly been granted, and yet, notwithstanding that grant, the final stage would have been precipitated; less time would have been afforded for carrying out measures of Government relief, and the country would have emerged from the calamity with even a greater loss of life, and loaded with a debt which it would have taken years to pay off.

29. When the changes in society anticipated by the Commission have taken place, when private wealth has accumulated, and the land has been concentrated in the hands of a comparatively small number of proprietors; when the mass of the agricultural class has ceased to possess rights in the lands they cultivate, and have become mere day-laborers, then possibly some such system as that proposed by the Commission may be beneficially adopted.

30. Until some such change has arisen I would strongly deprecate the adoption of the proposals of the Famine Commission, and would leave all such calamities to be met by Government, which is, in fact, the great landlord of all Bengal; the more so that with the energetic measures now under consideration, or in course of execution, for affording means of irrigation in the Districts most likely to suffer from famine, such calamities may be expected to be of rare occurrence.

31. The subject of drainage, to which it is suggested to extend the taxation under consideration, will, I observe, be provided for, when necessary, by local taxation leviable on all classes, on the principle laid down in the late despatch of the Secretary of State for India on the subject of the road cess.

No. 787, dated the 7th July 1870.

From—J. Westland, Esq., Officiating Legal Remembrancer.

To—The Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2457, dated 22nd June, in which my opinion is asked upon certain proposals by the Famine Commissioners regarding local relief to the indigent poor.

2. I have given the matter my best consideration, and I fail to see upon what principle of equity the indigent poor, in time of abnormal distress, are to be thrown for relief upon the landholders. The class from which these poor are mostly derived, is precisely the class which does not derive its sustenance from the land. The Commissioners themselves write (paragraph 63)—"All our commerce and our enterprize, our great works and improved systems, create or increase the class of laborers depending on regular wages; and all increase of private wealth, enabling the richer to entertain laborers

who are no longer slaves or serfs, adds to the class." It seems to me that if any class is bound to afford relief to these laborers when an abnormal season has plunged them into distress, it ought to be the class who have created them, who profit by their existence, and who use them in ordinary times. It would be great injustice were the Government to declare, as the Famine Commissioners recommend, that when times of hardship compel the wealthy classes generally to restrict their expenditures, and turn their laborers and servants out of doors, the zemindars should take them up, provide them with work, and, after all is over, return them again to the use of their former masters.

3. I cannot understand the argument based on the permanent settlement. The only duties with reference to seasons of distress which it imposes upon the zemindars are these, that they act with moderation to their ryots, and expect no remissions or suspensions of revenue. On every principle of justice, as well as of law, it seems to me that they fulfil their duties as zemindars when they prevent their ryots and zemindary dependants coming upon the general resources of the country for relief.

4. When the Commissioners themselves say that the distressed classes are a creation of a state of things which did not exist, and was not thought of at the time of the permanent settlement, and that they have been called into existence not by zemindars, but by the wealthy classes generally, I cannot understand how they can argue that the obligation to provide for them was, by the permanent settlement, imposed upon the zemindars.

5. My opinion is therefore this, that to impose upon the zemindars as a class the burden of meeting local distress would be a perfectly arbitrary measure, and one which has not the shadow of justice to support it.

6. I have entirely left out of consideration the argument, that to come upon zemindars in times of scarcity, is to come upon the class that is least able to bear any burden, and is most affected by the scarcity; and I do not understand that I am asked to express any opinion as to whether local taxation or the imperial revenues should be considered the proper resort in times of abnormal distress.

No. 228, dated Berhampore, the 11th July 1870.

From—C. E. Lance, Esq., Officiating Commissioner of the Rajhsahye Division.

To—The Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Dept.

In reply to your letter No. 2444, dated the 22nd ultimo, I have the honor to report regarding the proposal of the Famine Commissioners that the landholders should be compelled to support the population in times of extraordinary want.

2. The proposition rests apparently on the ground that by the terms of the permanent settlement this duty devolves on landholders in Bengal.

The Commissioners say "the obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government, although sufficient effect has not been given to the obligations by precise law."

3. Now on this I would ask who are the Government officers referred to, and in what manner were the assertions made?

I think this information should have been clearly given, as the Commissioners lay much stress upon these assertions. But to my mind the fact that any number of such assertions have been made does not in any way affect the question whether the landlords are bound under the terms of the permanent settlement to support the poor of the land or not.

4. My own opinion is, that there is nothing in the terms of the permanent settlement to warrant an affirmative reply to the above question, and any attempt to saddle the land with such a burden on these grounds would surely be viewed with great and just dissatisfaction by the zemindars in general. Moreover, if it is doubtful whether the words of the law which conferred the permanent settlement can fairly be interpreted in such a manner as to lay the obligation of supporting its poor upon the land, I think that, considering the long period that has elapsed since that law was passed, the doubtful point should be given in favour of the landholder; that, in fact, it would be unjust to enforce obligations now which can scarcely have been recognized before, as no attempt has ever been made to enforce them, and this though such opportunity has not been wanting. The famines of former years would certainly have called forth some such attempt if the obligation had ever clearly existed.

5. So much for the obligation as arising from the terms of the permanent settlement. I will next consider, although it is hardly within the proposal of the Commissioners, whether a law should be passed making the landholders responsible for the support of the general population during famines on other and general grounds.

6. Such a responsibility should, I think, fall on all property, and I can see no reason why landed property alone should be singled out for the purposes of taxation in this matter. It may be said that if the landholder takes all he can from his tenant in times of plenty, he should be bound to support him in times of scarcity. But under our laws the landholder cannot generally assess his tenant at will; his power in this respect is very much restricted. He is bound to ask only a fair rent for his land, and that rent does not increase in times of plenty; the excess caused by an abundant harvest does not fall to the landlord, but remains with the tenant, and therefore this argument falls to the ground.

7. At any rate, the profits on land should not be taxed for the maintenance of other than the agricultural classes, and I believe it is generally admitted that the rural classes are the last to succumb before scarcity, and then only when scarcity has become actual famine.

8. Furthermore, in a time of famine, the landlord must suffer, and that very severely, in a pecuniary point of view. He must make large remissions of rent besides postponing the great bulk of the collections, and therefore the time of famine seems to me singularly inopportune for increasing his burdens. Under any circumstances, many years would probably elapse before he had recovered from the losses which he must undergo during such a time, and to add to his calamity by levying from him a severe impost would be hardly equitable.

9. Having, therefore, given the matter my best consideration, I am constrained to answer the first question contained in the 2nd paragraph of your letter under reply in the negative. I do not think the proposal made by the Famine Commissioners either fair or just, and it is consequently unnecessary to consider the second question.

10. I may add that in my opinion the only fair and just way of combating the terrible sufferings which must accompany such a calamity as a famine is by making the country at large contribute to the maintenance of the poor who in such times cannot support themselves. To endeavour to make that portion only of the country which is affected bear this burden would only add coals to the fire, and, whilst enlarging the circle of distress, would probably fail in providing adequate means for the relief measures which would be necessary.

No. 1 A, dated Dacca, the 18th July 1870.

From—R. L. MANGLES, ESQ., Offg. Commr. of the Dacca Division.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2446, dated the 22nd ultimo, forwarding copy of a letter No. 2790, dated the 7th idem, from the Government of India in the Home Department, and asking for an expression of my opinion on the proposals made by the Famine Commissioners for raising funds for the relief of the poor at times of famine by a system of local taxation.

2. It appears to have been assumed by the Famine Commissioners that the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement are bound to support the poor on their estates. The Commissioners, therefore, propose that this obligation, which they state the zemindars accept with the permanent settlement, should be put into practical operation, and that local taxation for the relief of the poor at times of famine should take the shape of a charge on zemindary right to be enforced by law.

3. As I read Regulation I. of 1793, I do not think that the zemindars who accepted the permanent settlement were under any legal obligation to support the poor of their estate in the manner indicated by the Famine Commissioners. Much less do I consider that this obligation attaches to the zemindars of the present day. Apart from this consideration, however, I am of opinion that it would be neither fair nor just to impose any special responsibility upon zemindars in this particular.

4. The undoubted obligations imposed on zemindars by the permanent settlement appear to me to be already sufficiently onerous. Notwithstanding all calamities of seasons, zemindars are required to discharge the revenue without delay or evasion, and to treat their tenants with moderation. If these obligations are enforced and discharged, it cannot be held that relatively with the rest of the community the zemindars alone occupy a position which render them specially liable to direct taxation in times of famine for the support of the destitute poor residing on their estates. It would surely amount to a positive hardship to impose special tax upon zemindars on such occasions when they are already in distressed circumstances, and must be in the worst possible position to meet the demand.

5. In order to carry out the proposals made by the Famine Commissioners to their logical conclusions,—and I observe that the Commissioners make some such proposal,—all persons having an interest in the soil should be required specially to contribute to the support of the poor, from the superior zemindar to the ryot having a right of occupancy only. But it is notorious that the classes among those who usually suffer most during calamities of seasons, are the middle men between the zemindar and the actual cultivators of the soil; so that it would be just as unfair to impose a special tax upon them, as it would be to tax the zemindar already sufficiently weighted with existing obligations at such times, or the struggling and starving ryot.

6. The proposal to localize the imposition of the tax which is involved in the scheme suggested by the Famine Commissioners is also, I think, objectionable as it is calculated to prolong and intensify distress. It never happens that scarcity amounting to famine is universal throughout the country. Consequently the inhabitants of those parts where famine has not been felt are in a far better position to contribute to the relief of the poor in the distressed Districts than the inhabitants of the spot, who must all of them be more or less affected by the prevailing want.

7. The present appears to me to be a very inopportune time to discuss the imposition of further direct taxation on the zemindars. I would respectfully warn Government against raising a feeling of distrust and disloyalty among this influential class. As a body, zemindars are already much dissatisfied, and, with or without reason, complain that

Government has taken away all their power and yet insists upon the discharge of all and every responsibility.

8. Further, I would respectfully urge that the introduction of a poor law for Bengal at the present time appears to me to be premature and unadvisable. The question can be far better discussed when actual famine is apprehended, and when the Government will be in a position to meet with the support of the public in introducing any such measure.

9. All ordinary cases of distress are, I think, already sufficiently provided for, owing to the manifest willingness of the Native community generally to feed the hungry. But if a poor law is ever introduced for Bengal, to meet the exigencies of an aggravated famine, I am of opinion that the taxation should be in the form of a general and not a special cess.

Dated Julpigoree, the 18th July 1870.

From—Colonel J. C. Haughton, c. s. i., Commr. of the Cooch Behar Division.

To—The Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

With reference to your letter No. 2450 of 22nd ultimo, calling for my opinion on the measures proposed by the Famine Commissioners for the relief of the poor in the event of famines occurring, I have the honor to report as follows.

2. The first question suggested for consideration is, are the proposals fair and just in themselves? The Committee admit that no rule of universal applicability can be framed, but they advert to the case of the permanently settled Districts as one with which they are able to deal. I shall, therefore, address myself to that case in the first instance. They say—"Our opinion is, that the obligation which the zemindars accepted with the permanent settlement, but which they have now failed to fulfil, should be put into practical operation, and that local taxation for the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindary rights to be enforced by law."

3. The Committee assume that the duty of supporting the poor once lay with the Government, and that at the time of the permanent settlement this duty was transferred to the zemindars. What ground exists for the assertion I know not, but the fact that it has always been asserted by the officers of Government, and never denied by the organs of the zemindars, if really a fact, is to my mind hardly a sufficient warrant for the statement. By Regulation I. of 1793 these zemindars were enjoined "to conduct themselves with good faith and moderation towards their dependent talookdars and ryots." They were at the same time informed that "in future no claims or applications for suspensions or remissions on account of drought, inundation, or other calamity of the season will be attended to;" *but*, failing in the punctual discharge of the public revenue, their lands would be "positively and invariably"

sold. In Article VII. we have the following: "It being the duty of the ruling power to protect all classes of people, and more particularly those who from their situation are most helpless, the Governor General in Council will, whenever he may deem it proper, enact such regulations as he may think necessary for the protection and welfare of the dependent talookdars and ryots, and all other cultivators of the soil, and no zemindar, independent talookdar, or other actual proprietor of the land, shall be entitled on this account to make any objection to the discharge of the fixed assessment which they have *(sic.)* agreed to pay."

4. I can see in this no obligation on the part of the zemindar to maintain his ryots in time of famine. It seems to me this portion of the enactment was intended to refer to such legislation as Act X. of 1859.

5. Unless, then, it can be shown more clearly than it has been that the alleged duty of the Government was transferred to the zemindars, with their knowledge and consent, at the time of the permanent settlement, I do not think it would be fair and just to tax the zemindars with the duty of supporting their ryots.

6. In saying so much I do not mean to deny the liability of the landholders to pay any general cess for the relief of the poor.

No. 241, dated Balasore, the 22nd July 1870.

From—T. E. Ravenshaw, Esq., Commissioner of the Orissa Division.

To—The Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Dept.

In reply to your confidential No. 2448 of 22nd June 1870, I have the honor to state that I am unable to concur in the Famine Commissioners' recommendation. To levy a cess on landed proprietors either during or after a season of famine or other dire calamity involving loss of life and property, stagnation of trade, and physical and mental prostration of the population, would not only be undesirable and unjust, but the diffusion of this burden over a period of several years would take away the only hope of speedy recovery of the country.

2. With few exceptions, landholders in Orissa are not wealthy men or men of capital, and any calamity affecting the agricultural population, simultaneously and equally presses on the landholders. They have not generally the means to meet extraordinary and heavy calls, and any cess levied on landholders must ultimately come out of the ryots and cultivators' pockets.

3. The first sufferers from famine and disease are generally the laboring and artizan classes who live from hand to mouth, and the maintenance of these does not appear to me to be a legitimate charge

on the land; the utmost we should do in respect to landholders would be to insist on prompt payment of their revenue to Government, and to let it be known that no remission of Government revenue will, even under any circumstances, be allowed. I believe there is nothing so thoroughly and completely demoralizing as remissions of revenue; it is far better that an estate be sold than that revenue be remitted. I believe every rupee of revenue remitted during the last famine in Orissa might have been realized from the landholders without difficulty or undue pressure, and the proceeds would have gone far towards the cost of maintaining absolutely indigent population.

4. Famine seldom or ever occurs except from want of water to permit of cultivation and to mature the crops. The first attention of Government should be given earnestly and systematically to provide artificial water-supply and irrigation to those parts of the country subject to recurring drought and famine. With canals affording means of communication and irrigation, famine would become next to impossible, and any local deficiency would be at once supplied from other places by means of cheap water-carriage. If Government had expended the famine outlay on canals in Orissa previous to 1867, the Famine Commissioners' report would never have been called for.

5. In this country nothing can be done without Government aid and assistance; and to enable Government to be liberal when occasion requires, provision must be made beforehand, and the funds should be ready and available for immediate use on occasions of imperial necessity, which must occur, more or less frequently, until the whole country is adequately protected from famine, and provided with means of internal trade and transport.

6. I think that expenditure of this sort should be met from funds equally contributed by the whole wealth of the country, and not contributed by landed proprietors and landed property alone. I would recommend the immediate imposition of a succession tax on the value of landed, funded, or personal property acquired by inheritance or by bequest, making the tax high in proportion to the distance of relationship of the person succeeding to the property to the last deceased proprietor; this would fall heavily on no one, would be paid once in a man's life, and just at the very time when he will be best able to pay it.

7. The proceeds should be primarily appropriated to re-payment of advances made by Government in times of famine or other calamity for relief or support of the people, and the balance be expended on construction of roads, canals, irrigation works, or other projects of a character tending to reduce future liability to famine or disease affecting the general welfare or health of the population. In the permanently settled Districts of Bengal, where there are numerous wealthy landed proprietors, the objections to a local cess may not have the same force as they have in Orissa; but I should deem it a more correct and proper principle to distribute the burden of a rate, cess or tax for relief or

prevention of general and wide spread calamity over the entire wealth of the country, and this broad principle can, I think, be best carried out by the measures I venture to propose.

No. A, dated Balasore, the 23rd July 1870.

From—J. BEAMES, ESQ., Collector of Balasore.

To—J. G. CHARLES, ESQ, Offg. Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

IN reply to your No. 2458, dated 22nd ultimo, I have the honor to state that in my opinion the proposal of the Famine Commissioners could not with fairness be carried out in Orissa.

2. The zemindars of the District are poor and their estates are small. There are no territorial magnates here. In a time of famine the zemindars suffer as much as their ryots, if not from the actual pangs of hunger, yet from the immensely increased expense of feeding themselves and families, and they have not the power of raising the rents of their ryots, or of making a large fortune from their estates, as their profits are so strictly limited by the settlement of the Province.

3. Even in theory the zemindar is only bound to support his ryots, not the mechanic and artizan class. In a time of famine, however, this latter is the class that suffers most; the ryot is far better off.

4. Mr. Ravenshaw has done me the honor of showing me his reply to this circular, and, as I entirely concur with everything he has written, it is unnecessary for me to say more. The proposal of a succession tax is, in my humble opinion, an admirable one, exactly suited to the peculiarities of the Native mind and feelings.

5. I would add only two remarks further:

1st.—In this District there are a few permanently settled estates. To them and to Bengal generally, I would not apply what has been written above. I consider that the zemindars of permanently settled estates might be fairly assessed for the purposes under discussion. Such assessment should take the form of a percentage on their mofussil jumma, and should be ascertained by compelling them to submit the originals of their jumma wasilbakee papers. The assessment should be made now and kept in hand against a rainy days under the title of "Famine Reserve Fund." All subordinate talookdars down to the lowest grade of mustagir should be subject to it, and a provision should be inserted in any Act which might be passed, rendering it illegal for the rents of any ryots to be raised, or any cess to be imposed upon them by the zemindars and others under colour of this tax.

2nd.—I would exempt the State altogether from contributing to these objects. That portion of the rent which is received by the State is already spent down to the last pice on public objects. It is not

as if Government only spent a portion of its land revenue receipts on public wants, and reserved the rest, as was the case in Mogul times, for the personal use of the sovereign. On the contrary Government spends all, and the zemindar spends none. How then can it be contended that before we can compel the zemindar to contribute his share we must contribute ours? If we do so, that is, if we devote to local works the same proportion of our share of the revenue as the zemindar is to contribute his, we must take the money away from other heads of expenditure, which would be unfair and unwise.

6. The interests and responsibilities of the Government extend to the whole of India, those of the zemindar are confined to his own District. It is but fair then that the State should spend its share of the revenue on general and imperial objects, leaving the zemindar to meet purely local and provincial wants.

7. I would exempt the wealthy members of other classes of the community. They have not received, as the zemindar has, a splendid gift from Government—a gift which entails great responsibilities;—they have earned their own wealth by their own exertions, and cannot be fairly charged with any demand upon that wealth beyond those taxes which are levied in return for protection in all civilized countries. The zemindar's position both as a landlord and as an hereditary trustee of Government property marks him out from all other classes as the one individual on whom this burden should be laid.

Dated Howrah, the 1st September 1871.

From—W. E. Ward, Esq., Officiating Magistrate of Howrah.

To—The Officiating Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential letter No. 2459, dated 22nd June last, and beg to offer the following remarks on the points referred to me for consideration.

2. I have been asked to consider—

1st, whether the proposals made by the Famine Commissioners are fair and just in themselves;

2nd, if they are, how they can best be given effect to.

3. In answer to the first question I have little hesitation in stating my opinion that in all countries, and more especially in a country like India, a system of local taxation for the relief of local distress, brought about by causes beyond the control of the people upon whom the burden of taxation will fall, is one which cannot be justified on any grounds whatever; and that all expenditure, over and above that which can be met from voluntary private charity, which it may be found necessary to incur for the purpose of relieving extraordinary distress, whether caused by famine, pestilence, or by any

other visitation of Providence, should be, as it always has been in civilized countries, met by the State alone.

4. Before, however, stating my reasons for entertaining this opinion, I will first consider the grounds on which the Famine Commission regard such local taxation (1) as necessary, and (2) as justifiable.

5. The first reason that I find urged by the Commission in support of the *necessity* of local taxation is, that it is inexpedient to encourage a too frequent appeal to the *general* public on account of *local* objects, because such appeals might be multiplied till the public became *callous* and the resource so necessary on great occasions might thus be lost.

6. Now I would ask, does the experience of the past afford us any just ground for entertaining apprehensions of this kind? Has the public, since we came into this country, ever shown any tendency to become callous in consequence of appeals to their benevolence? And can it be said that the appeals made to the general public within the last hundred years have been so frequent as to be likely to make the public callous in the future? If not, what reason have we to fear that such appeals will be more frequent hereafter?

7. In considering the frequency of famines in India, regard must, of course, be had to the vast extent of country over which we are ruling. The greater this extent of country the greater the chance of a public calamity in any given year, whether such calamity present itself in the shape of a war, a famine, an epidemic, or in any other shape, It would, however, I think, scarcely be a just plea for any Government to raise, that because it had taken possession of such a very large tract of country, it must look for a larger display of private charity, comparatively, than, say, the Government of a small country like Jamaica would look for.

8. I think that, if the records of past famines be consulted, it will be found that the public have shown themselves very far from callous to appeals made to their benevolence; and if, as I have said before, there is no sign yet of such callousness, I think it is premature to apprehend such hereafter, more especially when it is borne in mind that, by the opening out of railways and canals, the causes which have hitherto operated in producing famines are being year by year gradually removed.

9. There is yet another point to be considered. In this country what constitutes the "general public," to whom, in cases of famine, or of other local distress, an appeal for charity would be justifiable? The general principle which all Local Governments appear to follow in this respect is, that appeals for charity should be directed, in the first instance, to the general public of the affected locality. If the distress is so great that the voluntary contributions of the local general public are insufficient to meet it, an appeal to the outside public is permitted; and the greater the calamity to be dealt with the larger is that general public to which an appeal for charity is considered justifiable.

10. Thus, in cases of mere scarcity, not amounting to famine, such as that which has recently been experienced in the Behar Districts, appeals for charity were, if I am not mistaken, confined solely to the general public of those Districts. In the recent famine, however, which occurred in some of the Districts of the North-West Provinces and in Rajpootana, the general public appealed to was the entire public residing within the jurisdiction of the Local Government. It appears that the Local Government was consulted by the Government of India as to the necessity of appealing to the general public of India for the relief of distress in the North-West. The Local Government, however, did not consider the pressure and distress sufficiently developed to warrant such an appeal.—(See Administration Report of the North-West Provinces for 1868-69, page 8.) In the Orissa famine of 1866 the distress was found to be so severe as fully to warrant an appeal to the general public of India; and lastly, during the great famine of 1860-61 in the North-West Provinces not only was the general public of India appealed to, but an appeal was also made to the public of England, who came forward at once, subscribing no less than three lakhs of rupees for the relief of the famine-stricken.—(Girdlestone's report on famines in the North-West Provinces, page 87.)

11. This, then, being the general principle on which appeals to the public for charity to relieve local distress are made in this country, there is all the more reason for believing that such appeals will not be so frequent as to render the public appealed to callous to them. I think there is every ground for believing that such distress as was caused in the North-West Provinces by the famine of 1860-61 will never, owing to the rapidity with which works of irrigation are being pressed on, visit those Provinces again. It has been said (paragraphs 148, 150 of Mr. Girdlestone's report on famines) that but for the great advance in this and other respects which the country had made between 1837 and 1860, the famine of 1860-61 would undoubtedly have been felt as severely as that of 1837-38. So also we may anticipate that the means now at the disposal of the Government of India to grapple with famine in the North-West Provinces and in the Punjab are far more powerful than they were in 1860-61; and, fifty years hence, may we not be in a position to say that our works of irrigation have so far progressed as to render the appearance of famine in those Provinces almost an impossibility?

12. Then, again, as regards the Lower Provinces of Bengal, history tells us of three famines which have visited these plains, *viz.*, those of 1770, 1783, and 1868. Of the famine of 1770 we know very little beyond the bare fact that it carried off a large proportion of the population. How far the causes which led to this disaster might have been prevented, or, at any rate, how far the effect of an almost total cessation of rain throughout the country might have been mitigated by timely action on the part of Government, or if the means of communication throughout the country had been more perfect than they

were, it is impossible now to determine; but I think I am not too sanguine in assuming that a general famine, such as that of 1770, is not, in these days of advancement and of improved communications, likely to visit these plains again. Regarding the famine of 1783 our information is still more imperfect; but it is extremely doubtful whether that was a year of famine at all,—apparently it was only one of apprehended scarcity. The famine, then, of 1866 in Orissa is the onlyone regarding which we have any reliable information; and I think it may fairly be asked, when is it likely that this Province will ever suffer from famine again? Isolated as that Province has been, it is a matter of surprise that it has never suffered from famine before, and I think the Government has cause to congratulate itself, that in the course of hundred years it has only had occasion to come forward once and contribute to the relief of the people of Orissa. The means of communication between Orissa and the other Provinces of Bengal have now been considerably improved, and canal works are being vigorously pushed on. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that this first famine in Orissa will also be the last which that Province will ever see.

13. Looking, then, to the history of past famines in this country, and having regard to the rapid progress which is being made in carrying out works of irrigation, where such works are found to be necessary, and in improving the means of communication throughout the country, it is not unreasonable to expect that a famine of such severity as to justify an appeal for charity to the general public of India, is a contingency which is not likely to happen again in the North-Western Provinces more than once in a generation, and, in Lower Bengal, more than once in two generations.

14. This being so, and bearing in mind that the general public is an ever-changing body, that the general public of to-day will not be the general public of thirty years hence, the question again suggests itself, what possible ground can there be for apprehending that the people will become callous to future appeals for charity?

15. If the Governments of the North-Western Provinces and of the Punjab were to put forward such a plea as applicable to the general public residing within their respective jurisdictions, they might be considered as having some ground for doing so, because no one can read Mr. Girdlestone's report on the famines of the North-Western Provinces without seeing how peculiarly subject are those Provinces to be devastated by famine. It will be observed, however, leaving out of consideration the famines previous to that of 1837-38, regarding which we have no sufficient information, that even there appeals for charity to the general public were only made in 1837-38 and in 1860-61, to which must be added the appeal made in 1868-69. On each of these occasions we are told that the public responded most liberally. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient information on record to show what was the exact amount subscribed by the public in 1837-38—(Girdlestone's report, paragraph

116.) In 1860-61, however, we are told that the subscriptions which poured in were munificent— (Girdlestone's report, paragraph 116) ;—and in 1868-69 the appeal made to the public was cordially received, and responded to with great liberality—(Administration Report of the North-Western Provinces for 1868-69, paragraph 16).

16. Under these circumstances I can scarcely think that even the Governments of the North-Western Provinces and of the Punjab would advocate local taxation on such Provinces as Rajpootana and Ajmere, merely because the acknowledged liberality of the local public was found inadequate to cope unaided with local distress, or because the public which have proved themselves so liberal in the past might cease to be charitable hereafter.

17. The second reason urged by the Famine Commission in favor of the necessity of local taxation for the relief of local distress is, that it would be too heavy a burden upon Government if it were required to afford the relief necessary on every occasion of local distress.

18. The reply to this is obvious. There is no occasion whatever to apply to Government to afford the relief necessary on every occasion of local distress. It is only when local efforts, and an appeal to the general public has failed, that an appeal to Government is justifiable. The only question, therefore, to be considered is, have these appeals to Government for charity been so frequent in past years as to justify the allegation that they impose a burden on the resources of the country too heavy to bear ?

19. Looking again to the history of past famines, Government charity appears to have always expressed itself in one or more of the following four ways :

(1)—By a grant for gratuitous relief, *i. e.*, relief to those who are unable to work, equivalent to the amount raised by private subscription—(Girdlestone's report on famines, paragraph 125 ; Administration Report of the North-Western Provinces for 1868-69, page 7 ; Punjab Administration Report for 1868-69, memorandum of famine, page ii) ;

(2)—By a special grant for relief works upon which to employ the able-bodied poor ;

(3)—By remissions of revenue ; and

(4)—By grain importations.

20. Now grants made by Government for relief works can, I think, scarcely be regarded as charity proper, because the Government always gets a fair return for the money which it lays out. Should the Government be called upon in any year to grant a larger sum under

this head than was estimated for in the imperial budget, the proper course, as it appears to me, would be to meet the charge by curtailing other expenditure on public works. The actual loss, then, which Government may be regarded as having suffered by the necessity which it has hitherto recognised of expending money in pure charity for the relief of local distress is limited to the first, third, and fourth of the above heads.

21. Unfortunately there is nothing on record to show clearly what was spent by Government under these three heads during the famine of 1837-38. Mr. Girdlestone says, it is quite impossible to estimate the sums spent by Government in gratuitous relief—(paragraph 115 of Mr. Girdlestone's report) ;—and the remissions of revenue may have amounted to 90½ lakhs of rupees, out of a revenue of 360 lakhs, or they may not have exceeded 64 lakhs—(paragraph 114 of Mr. Girdlestone's report). Further, it does not appear that Government undertook to import grain into the distressed Districts. At the outside, then, it is doubtful whether Government in 1837-38 spent more in charity than £800,000.

22. Regarding the sums spent by Government in charity in 1860-61, we have more complete information. I take the following account of expenditure in the North-Western Provinces and in the Punjab from Mr. Girdlestone's report on famines, paragraphs 139, 140, 145, 146, 148 :—

	Rs.
Gratuitous relief in the North-Western Provinces ...	78,534
Remissions of revenue in the North-Western Provinces	2,34,646
" " Punjab	6,74,526
Total ...	9,87,706

There was no importation of grain on Government account. What sum, if any, was spent on gratuitous relief in the Punjab is not stated; but, if we add to the above Rupees 80,000 on this account, it may be assumed that the total sum spent by Government in pure charity during the famines of 1860-61 did not exceed altogether £107,000.

23. With respect to the Orissa famine of 1866, the following information has been placed at my disposal by Mr. McNeile, the Officiating Secretary to the Board of Revenue :

		Rs.	Rs.
Gratuitous relief expenditure	...	5,17,141	

Remissions of Revenue.

		Rs.	
In Balasore	...	5,04,465*	
In Cuttack	...	7,58,062*	
In Pooree	...	2,45,438*	
		2,60,937†	
			17,68,902

Loss on rice importation operations.

In 1866	...	10,02,966	
From 1st January 1867 to 31st March 1870 ...	...	41,31,400	
			51,34,366
Total ...		......	74,20,409

The figures showing the loss on rice importation operations are approximate, the accounts not having been finally adjusted as yet in the Office of the Board of Revenue. Assuming then that the conditions on which remissions of revenue have been promised will be fulfilled, we may estimate the loss of Government by the Orissa famine to amount in round numbers to £742,000.

24. With respect to the famine of 1868-69 in the North-Western Provinces and in the Punjab, the account appears, up to the close of 1868-69, to have stood thus—

North-Western Provinces.

			Rs.	Rs.
See North-Western Provinces' Administration Report for 1868-69, p. 14, 176.	Gratuitous relief expenditure ...	...	1,50,000	
	Remissions of revenue ...	...	1,50,000‡	
				3,00,000

Punjab.

See Punjab Administration Report for 1868-69, page 33, and memorandum on famine, p. vii.	Gratuitous relief expenditure ...	...	31,813	
	Remissions of revenue ...	...	2,48,294§	
				2,80,107
			Total	... 5,80,107

* These sums have not yet been finally written off, the conditions on which remissions of revenue were allowed to the zemindars in Orissa being, that they should make proportionate remissions of rent to their ryots. It has been found necessary, in order effectually to protect the ryots, that the amount to be remitted should be kept on the revenue accounts until the period of limitation within which the ryots can be sued for rent has elapsed. As soon as such suits are entirely barred by limitation, these amounts for remission will be written off.

† This sum has actually been written off the accounts.

‡ The revenue realized fell short of the estimate by Rupees 20,80,416. This was due for the most part to remissions and suspensions—(page 178 of Administration Report of North-Western Provinces for 1868-69.) The amount of revenue which was only suspended is not stated; but making allowance for the fact that a portion of the revenue suspended will ultimately have to be remitted, the total final loss to Government on account of remissions of revenue may be put down at one and-a-half lakhs.

§ See pages 33, 34, of Punjab Administration Report for 1868-69. The whole of the irrecoverable and doubtful balances I have put down as remissions.

That is to say, the loss to Government from pure charity on account of the famine of 1868-69 did not, in round numbers, exceed £58,000 up to the close of 1868-69.

25. Now, the question is, with these figures before us, can it be said that Government has been over-burdened by the demands made upon its charity? In the generation which has succeeded the great famine of 1837-38, only three times has the Government been called upon to give money away in charity; and the total sum thus expended in the period alluded to does not appear to have exceeded, if my figures are correct, £907,000, and what is this to a country which enjoys an annual revenue of nearly 50 millions?

26. But even if it be admitted that the burden thrown upon Government by the appeals made to its charity is more than it can reasonably be expected to bear, wherein lies the necessity for local taxation to relieve it? If the ordinary resources of Government in any given year of famine are insufficient to enable it efficiently to cope with the distress occasioned thereby, surely nothing could be more justifiable than that the Government should call upon the country to add to its resources, in the same way as it would on the occasion of a mutiny or war. If fanatic tribes make inroads upon the Punjab, the Government does not think of imposing a local tax on the people of that Province to enable it to meet the expenditure necessary to carry on a petty border war. Why then should the case be different when famine devastates any portion of the country? If the ordinary resources of the country are insufficient to repel war, pestilence, or famine, I cannot conceive anything more justifiable than that the Government should add to those resources by the imposition of a light income tax on the whole country; for it may be accepted, as a general principle, that it is for the good of the nation that the people in every portion of its territories should continue in a state of prosperity; and this being so, the public will scarcely complain if they are called upon in cases of emergency to contribute towards the national welfare.

27. It must be borne in mind that, in estimating the loss to Government from famines during the past thirty years to be what I have stated, *viz.*, £907,000, a sum of no less than £513,000 in round numbers is due to the loss on rice importation during the Orissa famine. If I am not mistaken, the policy of importing rice, and of selling it at favorable rates in famine stricken Districts, is one which Government has never adopted, except during the Orissa famine. The trade of the country has always been left to take its own course, the Government never interfering; in fact, the only reason why the Government interfered with the natural course of trade in 1866 is, that Orissa was so cut off from all communication with grain-producing

Districts that trade was prevented from taking its natural course. The state of things is now different. Orissa is no longer, I believe, the isolated Province it was in 1866; and should it be the misfortune of that country to be visited by famine again, the Government will probably not consider itself justified in importing and selling grain in the distressed Districts on its own account. Leaving out of calculation then the item of £513,000 above alluded to, I think I am pretty safe in saying that in the next generation the demands for charity made on the public purse will not exceed £384,000. Is this too heavy a burden for Government, with a revenue of nearly 50 millions sterling *per annum* to bear once in thirty years? If so, an income tax of half per cent. for one year will suffice to relieve the Government.

28. I may add next that, in estimating the loss to Government occasioned by past famines, I have taken no account of the large increase in revenue derived in famine years from irrigation. If this be taken into account, the net loss of revenue to Government occasioned by famines will be found to be exceedingly small, and hereafter will be smaller still.

29. A third reason advanced by the Commission in favor of the necessity of local taxation for the relief of local distress caused by famine is, that a too frequent appeal to a charitable general public would be liable to abuse, and that the facility of obtaining the aid of Government, and on the public funds, would be still more so. By this I do not understand the Commission to mean that the mere fact that public charity will come forward to relieve distress has a tendency to encourage undeserving applications for relief, for that abuse is likely to arise whether public charity be general or local, voluntary, or, as the Commission propose to make it, compulsory. What the Commission apparently mean is that, if the general public and the Government be too liberal in their charity, local charity—the charity of those who, living in the midst of the distressed, are expected to be the first to contribute towards their relief—will be less inclined to show itself.

30. This, I think, is another of those apprehensions regarding the future which is not supported by our experience of the past. So far as the European public is concerned, I think we may say that there is no cause whatever for any such apprehension. In all cases of real local distress, the local European public comes to the front at once, and contributes to its relief according to its means, and no appeal to the outside or general public is ever made until they have done so. As regards Natives the case is different; not, I think, because they are less disposed to be charitable, but rather because they have an indiscriminate system of charity of their own, which they do not always care to forego in favor of our system. The Commission, it will be observed, refer in the 65th paragraph of their report, to the wonderful way in which

Natives recognize the personal obligations of supporting their own poor; but their charity has no system, and it is, as I have said before, indiscriminate. It is only the middle class of Natives whom I have ever found it difficult to induce to subscribe to a relief fund. The higher and more respectable classes—the zemindars who really have some substance from which to contribute, and not that class of zemindars who own nine-tenths of the estates in the Burdwan District*—I have always found to be as liberal in their charity as I could well expect them to be.

31. Then, again, I think the Magistrates of Districts in which distress prevails may be trusted to use every effort in their power to elicit local charity, and no Magistrate would ever think of applying for charity to the outside public, or to Government, until all local efforts to relieve local distress had been exhausted. The Government, in fact, has always impressed upon Magistrates their duty in this respect, and pointed out that it can only consent, when local charity has done all that could be expected from it, and yet failed to cope with local distress, to supplement such charity—never to supplant it. As long, then, as Government continues to impress this duty upon Magistrates, there is little fear of any abuses arising of the nature contemplated by the Famine Commission.

32. I now come to the ground on which the Commission considered local taxation for the relief of local distress *justifiable*.

33. The Commission, in the 69th paragraph of their report, state that the obligation of supporting the poor of this country attached to Government while Government was the great land-holder of the country; but that this obligation was, by the terms of the permanent settlement, transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindars; and from this the Commission argue that local taxation for the relief of local distress is justifiable on the ground that the zemindars have failed to fulfil their duty to the poor on their estates, which was expected from them under the terms of the permanent settlement.

34. Now, I must say, I can find nothing in the terms of the permanent settlement to support the statement made by the Commission, that the obligation of contributing to the support of the poor of this country was transferred to the zemindars. It appears to me to be an utter mistake in the first instance to assume that the Government has, in the permanently settled Districts of Bengal, even transferred its

* Out of 4,858 estates on the rent roll of the Burdwan District, 4,645 are permanently settled, and of these permanently settled estates 4,260 pay revenue to Government of less than Rupees 100. Of the 213 estates not permanently settled, 112 consist of small plots of land not large enough to support a respectable ryot.

rights as superior landlord to the present zemindars. "By the ancient law of the country" (to use the language to the preamble of Regulation XIX., 1793) "the ruling power is entitled to a certain proportion of the produce of every beegah of land (demandable in money or in kind, according to local custom), unless it transfers its right thereto for a term, or in perpetuity, or limits the public demand upon the whole of the lands belonging to an individual, leaving him to appropriate to his own use the difference between the value of such proportion of the produce and the sum payable to the public, whilst he continues to discharge the latter." Now, I can find nothing in the Regulations of 1793 to show that the Government ever transferred either for a term, or in perpetuity, the right alluded to in the above-mentioned preamble, or, in other words, that it ever transferred its rights as superior landlord to the zemindars. All that the Government did in 1793 was to limit in perpetuity the public demand upon the lands belonging to the zemindars. The Government, as it appears to me, no more transferred its rights as superior landlord by fixing in perpetuity the revenue to be paid to it by the zemindars than the Maharajah of Burdwan has transferred his rights and responsibilities as landholder by letting out all his estates in putni at a fixed rent for ever. Moreover in the temporarily settled estates of the North-Western Provinces, the Government is always regarded as the superior landlord. Why should the case be different in the permanently settled Districts of Lower Bengal? If a landlord limit his demand for rent for ever, how is his status as landlord different from one who limits his demand for only thirty years.

35. But even admitting that the Government has transferred its rights as superior landlord to the zemindars, how can this affect the obligation which attaches to the Government of every civilized country in the world to provide for the poor of the country which it governs, or rather, I should say, to supplement private charity where it is obvious that such cannot cope alone with local distress? The Government of India recognises the obligation of providing from its funds for the education of the people; can it, then, evade the much stronger obligation of providing for the poor? Is not the obligation to save life stronger than the obligation to give education to the masses?

36. It is of course equally the duty of every individual in the country to contribute according to his means towards the relief of the poor and distressed, in the same way as he is expected to contribute to the education of the masses; and, if the voluntary contributions of the public, aided by an equivalent grant from the State, are not sufficient to meet the required expenditure, nothing appears to me more proper and reasonable than that the Government should impose upon the nation at large a compulsory rate, or tax proportioned to the emergency of the case which it has to meet; but all I wish to protest against is, the statement made by the Famine Commission, that

the Government has transferred to the zemindars of the country its obligations to provide for the safety of the poor, and that, therefore, it is in no way incumbent on the State to contribute a single rupee from the public exchequer towards the relief of either local or general distress in the permanently settled Districts of Lower Bengal.

37. During the great Irish famine of 1847 the English Parliament voted a grant of £10,000,000 for the relief of the sufferers. It was recognised at once as an obligation by the English Government to contribute liberally towards the relief of the famine-stricken, even though the famine was confined to one portion only of Great Britain. I do not believe that the idea ever suggested itself to the English Government that Ireland should be taxed for the relief of its own distress, and yet Ireland is a country which, owing to its dense population and the entire dependence of the people on the potatoe crop, is peculiarly liable to the visitations of famine. Why, then, should the case be different in this country?

38. Then, again, to what portion of the proclamation of 1793 does the Famine Commission refer, when they state that the zemindars have failed to fulfil their duty to the poor on their estates, which was expected from them under the terms of the permanent settlement? When recently submitting my report on Colonel Strachey's Canal Bill, I stated my opinion that, having regard to Article VII. of the Proclamation of 1793, Government was justified in taxing the zemindars for the purpose of enabling it to carry out works intended for the welfare of the various *agricultural* classes. The Secretary of State, however, in his Education despatch of the 12th May last, paragraph 8, has expressed his dissent from this interpretation of Article VII. This being so, the proposition put forward by the Famine Commission (which I take to be also based on the wording of Article VII. of the proclamation) that local taxation is justifiable to enable Government to carry out measures for the relief of the *poor* of the country *including both the agricultural and non-agricultural classes*, must necessarily be vetoed and thus one of the principal grounds upon which the Commission advocate local taxation for the benefit of the poor must be set aside as inadmissible.

39. The above remarks are intended to meet all that I find urged by the Famine Commission in support of a policy of local taxation, as both necessary and justifiable for the relief of local distress. I will now state briefly why I consider that all expenditure over and above that which can be met from voluntary private charity, which it may be found necessary to incur for the purpose of relieving extraordinary distress, should be met by the State alone.

40. There is an Act of Parliament which provides that the revenues of India shall be expended for the purposes of India alone, or,

in other words, we profess to govern the country for the good of the people. We are no longer a company of traders seeking to enrich ourselves at the expense of the country. On the contrary, the entire revenue of the country, which finds its way into the public exchequer, the Supreme Government undertakes to expend in a manner which it thinks shall best conduce to the national welfare. Now, as long as the present system of centralization continues in our government of this country, as long as the entire revenues of India flow into one common exchequer, and remain at the disposal of the Supreme Government, so long must the Supreme Government consider that every portion of the vast continent over which it undertakes to rule and the resources of which it thus appropriates, has an indefeasible claim upon the general fund of the nation in all cases of extreme emergency. Cases of extreme emergency I would define to be those which involve the question of life and death to the people committed to our charge, as distinguished from other cases, such as the education of the people, the improvement of communications, &c., which, though also demanding the serious attention of Government, and a liberal expenditure, so far as the resources of the country will allow from the public exchequer can bear no comparison in importance with the more serious and emergent cases to which I have alluded. Such cases are those which arise out of the three great visitations of Providence—the "great correctives" of population, as political economists call them—to which every nation is subject, *viz.*, war, pestilence, and famine. It is but a truism to say that it is the duty of every Government to prevent, as far as lies in its power, the recurrence of such calamities, and if it cannot do so, the conclusion appears to me inevitable. The Government must accept the responsibility of checking or mitigating the evil effects of that which it cannot prevent, and of expending money liberally from the public exchequer for this purpose. If the Government cannot do this with the ordinary means at its disposal, it must add to its own resources by taxing the nation, as a body, must contribute its utmost to the warding off of a calamity, which, even though it may not spread itself over the entire country, yet, if it affects in a serious degree any portion thereof, must necessarily, under our present system of Government, be regarded as a national calamity, and it appears to me no more fair specially to tax a particular people for the relief of their own distress than, as I have said before, it is fair specially to tax a portion of the country which is subject to the inroad of fanatics and lawless tribes to cover the expenditure which it may be found necessary to incur to keep such fanatics and tribes in proper subjection. If a border war or mutiny breaks out, the Supreme Government pays for it. If it cannot pay for it from ordinary revenue, it has recourse to an income tax. So also it should be in the case of famine or pestilence. It is the duty of Government to prevent the occurrence of such calamities by the extension of canal irrigation, and by proper drainage and conservancy measures. If it cannot do this,

then the Government, or, what is the same thing, the general public, must pay for the cost of alleviating the sufferings of the people, whether such suffering be local or general, brought about by calamities which the Government cannot prevent. I can conceive nothing more unjust than that the Government should withhold from adopting effective measures for the prevention of those calamities to which certain portions of its dominions may be peculiarly subject, and yet, when they do occur, and recur, to tax the sufferers for the relief of their own distress.

41. I say "tax the sufferers," because I think it will be admitted that upon every person, from the poorest laborer and agriculturist to the ordinary land-holder, famine presses most heavily, though not in an equal degree. Perhaps the only person who makes a profit, or at any rate, does not lose by a famine, is the grain merchant or mahajan. These may also be landholders, owners of vast estates, who enjoy incomes more than sufficient to procure them the necessaries and even luxuries of life, and upon whom the pressure of famine does not bear to any appreciable extent; but the number of these is so very small that they may be left out of consideration; and wherever they may be found to exist, the Government is, in my opinion, not likely to get more from them by compulsory taxation than by appealing to their benevolence. Every person, too, having a beneficial interest in land, is expected to tax himself by large remissions of rent to his tenants. Landholders have been especially encouraged to do this by the Government consenting to grant to all who exhibit a spirit of charity in this respect liberal remissions of revenue. Under these circumstances could it be considered fair to impose a heavy tax, extending over several years, on a suffering people rather than to impose, as I have before suggested for one year, a light income tax on the entire population of India, supposing any taxation to be necessary at all? Would it not also be somewhat inconsistent and strange to grant remissions of revenue to the landholders of a suffering Province, and then to tax them with a view to reimburse Government for the loss occasioned by such remissions?

42. If the Government requires to be reimbursed at all on account of remissions of revenue made in years of famine, let it debit to each estate to which such remissions have been allowed the amount of revenue remitted, as a charge to be paid off by enhancing the revenue of such estates in subsequent years, until the entire debt has been liquidated, or, what amounts to the same thing, let the revenue be only suspended, never remitted. Such a course, however, can, in my opinion, scarcely commend itself; for it implies that Government does not recognize the obligation of being charitable to deserving objects of charity, and that is a position which, I trust, no civilized Government in the world will ever attempt to maintain.

43. The Famine Commission allude to the tendency of mankind to be over-charitable to their neighbours with other people's money.

Now, in the first place, the history of past famines in this country does not point to the display of any excessive charity towards those who suffered. The combined charity of the local public, the general public, and Government, have rather fallen short of, than exceeded what was required. Then again, how far can it be justly said that, when under the influence of unquestionable distress, a country like Orissa, or a Local Government like that of the North-Western Provinces, appeals to the Supreme Government for charity, it shows a tendency to be charitable *with other people's money ?* I presnme that neither Orissa nor the Provinces of the North-West are a burden to the State. The revenue yearly derived from these Provinces exceeds, I believe, the expenditure incurred by the Supreme Government on their account; and, if this be so, can an application made, say, once in a generation from either country to give back to it in charity a portion of the excess revenue which it has contributed from year to year be taken as exhibiting a tendency to be charitable with other people's money?

44. But, even if I am wrong in assuming that the Provinces of Orissa and of the North-West contribute to the general fund of the nation sufficient to cover their own expenditure, the claim of those Provinces on the general fund, in case of extreme emergency, is nevertheless one which must be respected; for, to return to what I have urged before, as long as our present system of Government continues, as long as the several Provinces included in the vast continent of India continue to contribute to one public exchequer, every one of the 180 millions of people committed to our charge has necessarily an indefeasible claim upon Government, and upon the general public, on all occasions when it is overtaken by a sudden calamity which defies all local efforts to avert it. If the Government fails to recognize this claim, it must either fail to recognize the obligation of administering the general fund for the good of the general public, or it will be driven to the necessity of urging that it is not necessarily for the good of the general public that the lives of those who form an integral portion of it should be saved. It would be as reasonable, I think, to argue that it is not for the good of man that his limbs should, if possible, be saved from amputation.

45. I cannot help thinking that the views of the Famine Commission have been influenced by a consideration of the vast extent of country over which we are ruling. They appear to incline to the opinion that, because the area of country over which we rule is exceptionally large, the public exchequer cannot possibly be expected to meet all the demands for charity made upon it. It appears to me that a father of a large family might as reasonably (in fact he could with much more reason) argue, that because he had so many children he could not be expected to provide for them all. I do not see how the obligations of Government are altered, whether it rules over a small island, or whether

it governs the whole world. As our possessions increase our resources increase; the larger the country over which we undertake to rule the greater our responsibilities and obligations; and if we fail to recognize this maxim, whilst, on the other hand, we allow the revenues of those countries which from time to time become annexed to our dominions to flow into and swell the receipts of the public exchequer, we must necessarily, as I have said before, cease to recognize the obligation to administering the general fund for the general good.

46. I am not, of course, considering what might be the case if our system of government in this country were other than it is. It has been often urged that it is not fair, say to the people of Orissa, that any portion of what they contribute to the general fund of the State should be expended for the benefit of the people residing in the Punjab, and on this main ground is based the argument in favor of decentralization in our system of government. Whatever may be the merits of this argument, they need not be considered here, and, for this reason, I have confined myself to advocating the general principle that, as long as there *is* a general fund administered by one Supreme Government, to which every Province subject to that Government contributes, so long has every such Province an indefeasible claim upon that fund in all cases of extreme emergency.

47. In advocating an income tax, in case any taxation at all is necessary, for the relief of local distress, I have not failed to consider how objectionable such a tax is to the people of this country, and how desirable it is on that account not to have recourse to its imposition, except in cases of extreme emergency. But such cases of extreme emergency do arise when either war, pestilence, or famine devastates the land. In time of war the tax-paying public have always recognized the justice and necessity of an income tax, so would they also in the case of a pestilence or famine. War, pestilence, and famine, as I have said before, are all equally national calamities, and if the nation, with the ordinary resources at its disposal, cannot prevent these, it is obviously to the interests of the nation that it should add to its resources with a view to their repression.

48. Another reason for recommending an income tax to reimburse the Government for any extraordinary expenditure, which it may be found necessary to incur in pure charity, is that the amount of tax to be levied from the people would be so small as to be scarcely appreciable, and, as Mill says, the best remedy to apply to the evil caused by the inequality of an income tax is to make the tax as light and as little felt as possible.

49. Should the Government determine, which is not unlikely, that the expenditure, or rather the net loss, incurred in years of famine, is not sufficiently serious to justify the imposition of an income tax on the general public, I do not think it could well urge that an income tax, or cess on the local public which is already suffering from the

burden of famine, is more justifiable. The Government cannot, as I have endeavoured to show, entirely evade the obligation of being charitable in years of extraordinary distress any more than a private individual can; the call made upon Government charity can either be met from the public exchequer, or it cannot. If it cannot, the nation must be called upon to contribute further to the resources of Government; if it can, there is no need for Government to make any call either upon the general public, or upon the local suffering public.

50. The Famine Commission deprecate a poor rate, and yet recommend that Government should advance money to the zemindars to enable them to support the poor on their estates, such advances, if excessive, to be recovered by a rate spread over several years. What is this but practically imposing a poor rate on zemindars; and, if the anticipations of the Famine Commission are correct, *viz.*, that notwithstanding all that the Government is doing towards the improvement of communications and the extension of canal irrigation, famines will occur and recur, then is there not every reason to believe that, before the advances made in one year of famine have been paid off by the proposed rate, another year of famine will have come rendering further advances and a continuance of the rate necessary? In short, what the Famine Commission practically recommend, and yet deprecate, is that the zemindars of those Provinces in this empire, which are peculiarly subject to the visitations of extraordinary distress, should be subjected to a poor rate in perpetuity for the relief of the sufferers.

51. As before urged, it is the duty of Government to prevent the recurrence of famines, and the rapid extension of canal irrigation must effectually bring about this desired end. I cannot agree with the statement of the Famine Commission, alluded to in the last paragraph, that all precautions taken, and all improvements made, famines must recur. It would be as reasonable, I think, to anticipate now the recurrence of the black death, the sweating sickness, and the plague—diseases which devastated England in those days when the Thames and its tributaries conveniently served the double purpose of sewers and water-supply. The great stumbling block to the extension of works of irrigation is the difficulty in inducing the ryots to take water when they know they have to pay for it. This stumbling block has been one of the causes which has induced the Government of India recently to suspend further operations on the Damooda Canal. Having only lately left the Burdwan District, and having, during my last cold weather tour, made many and careful enquiries on the subject, I can say that, if this canal project be abandoned, it will be a serious loss to the District. The average crop obtainable there is not more than twelve annas, that is to say, one-fourth of the agricultural wealth of the District is lost to it every year for want of water. This is a sufficiently significant fact, and the ryots know that it is a fact, and yet it is quite within the rage of possibility, though I think improbable in the case of the ryots of the

Burdwan and Hooghly Districts, whose ideas are more advanced, that they should refuse to take water. Under these circumstances, I am a strong advocate for the application of the compulsory clauses B. and C. of Colonel Strachey's Canal Bill, upon which I have recently reported. It will be difficult, I think, to develop the resources of this great country, and to add to the material wealth and happiness of its people if we wait for the consent of the uneducated masses to their own advancement. In his recent Education despatch, to which I have before alluded, the Secretary of State remarks as follows: "It is above all things requisite that the benefit to be derived from the rates," *i. e.*, local rating for purposes of local improvements, "should be brought home to their doors, that those benefits should be palpable, direct, immediate." The Secretary of State further goes on to say that "the making and improving of wells, tanks, and other works of irrigation, affecting comparatively small areas of land, are the operations which probably best comply with these conditions," and, alluding to the position which roads hold as being "the first requisites in the improvement of every country," he adds that, "although as yet they may not be equally valued by the people, *it is the duty of Government to think for them in this matter*, and the benefits they derive will become year by year more apparent to themselves."

52. I should say that the first requisite for the improvement of those Provinces of India which are peculiarly liable to the visitations of famine, is canal irrigation rather than roads. The benefits, too, derivable from canal irrigation would be to the mass of the people more palpable, direct, and immediate, than the benefits derived from the opening out of road communications. Canals, moreover, and their distributaries, may be utilized both for purposes of irrigation and for purposes of traffic, so that whereas roads only serve to develop the trade of the Districts which they traverse, canals will not only do as much in this respect, but will also increase the agricultural produce half as much again—some say will even double it. My opinion is, that if, in a District like that of Burdwan, which I have recently had under my charge, all the money which has been spent during the last fifty years in constructing and maintaining the *kutcha* roads of the District, which for six months in the year are impassable, had been spent on the construction and maintenance of canals, the wealth of the District would have been double, and perhaps treble what it is now, and the same may, perhaps, be said with respect to many other portions of the country.*

53. There is scarcely any necessity for my entering upon the discussion of the second question proposed by Government, *viz.*, if the proposals of the Famine Commission are fair and just in themselves,

* By expenditure on the construction and maintenance of canals I mean of course the net expenditure, *i. e.*, the gross expenditure incurred in constructing and maintaining *minus* the canal receipts.

how can they best be given effect to? I would only say that, if those proposals are to be given effect to, let a terminable poor rate, the amount of which and the term of which shall depend upon the amount expended by Government in any year of famine, be imposed not on the land-holders only, but just in the same way as it is now under contemplation to levy an education cess and a road cess.

54. In my recent report on Colonel Strachey's Canal Bill I entered fully into the question of local rating, regarded in connection with the permanent settlement, and stated fully my reasons for considering that local taxation for the purpose of local improvements could in no way be regarded as an infringe ment of the terms of the Proclamation of 1793. Since then the Secretary of State's Education despatch of the 12th May last has been published, which finally disposes of this much disputed question, and lays down the general principle that in every Province rating for local expenditure is taxation entirely distinct from land revenue, whether the tenures of the landholders of this country be permanent or temporary. The Secretary of State has also declared that a cess, when levied from all owners of property, including those of land, cannot be considered as an increase of the public demand, within the meaning of Article VI. of the Proclamation of 1793, in consequence of the improvement of their estates by zemindars.

55. This important question having been now finally settled, the time perhaps is not very far distant when the people will be called upon to pay a road cess, an education cess, a canal cess, and perhaps a drainage cess. So far let the system of local rating be carried out, but I think it should be carried no further just at present. There is much discontent abroad among the people in consequence of the income tax, and the prospect of local taxation being superadded to taxation for imperial purposes has only served to increase that discontent. This is not the time, therefore, for considering the question as to whether a poor rate is or is not justifiable and necessary. Let the system of local rating be confined, as the Secretary of State urges, to cases in which the benefits derived from the expenditure to be incurred are, to the mass of the people, palpable, direct, immediate, and, I would add, which are preventive rather than remedial, which are intended to remove the causes of local distress rather than to alleviate the miseries of those who suffer from its effects.

56. Should the works carried out with the aid of these local cesses fail to prevent the recurrence of local distress, in whatever form such distress appears, then will it be time to re-consider the question of an extraordinary poor rate as necessary for the relief of the suffering poor; but that time, I apprehend, will never come, and to consider the question now is, in my opinion, premature.

57. In conclusion I have to apologise for the delay in submitting this report. It has been caused mainly by my recent transfer from Burdwan, and by subsequent severe illness.

No. 2409, dated Chota Nagpore, the 5th September 1870.

From—Colonel E. T. Dalton, c. s. i., Commissioner of Chota Nagpore.

To—H. S. Beadon, Esq., Offg. Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

I have the honor to acknowledge your Office letter No. 2449 of the 22nd June last, calling for my opinion on the suggestions made by the Commissioners after the famine of 1865 to meet the expense thrown on the Government at such times by a system of local taxation.

2. I believe that of all the proposals that are just now under consideration for imposing additional taxation or cesses on the people, a well digested scheme for throwing on the owners of land, specially land under the perpetual settlement, a fair proportion of the cost of supporting the people on estates of the such owners during periods of famine would be the least unpopular.

3. Of the gross rental of an estate, the Government receive a considerable portion, the remainder represents the profits of proprietors and sub-proprietors. The above are all, to the extent of their respective shares, alike interested in the preservation of the lives of the rent-payers and farm-laborers.

4. The obligation has, in many cases, been freely acknowledged and duly met, but I could adduce many instances of flagrant repudiation of all such liability, and to meet such cases it is no hardship that legislation should be resorted to.

5. To allot the liability it would be necessary to keep distinct the account of each estate, and the proportion to be realized from the proprietors should be confined to their share of the cost of supporting the laboring and agricultural population of their respective estates. The whole might be made a charge on the head proprietor, he being allowed to recoup himself to the proper amount from the sub-proprietors.

6. The population of trading towns and the floating population should be excluded from the calculation. In the former case municipalities might be required to assist, but I do not see that any classes could be brought under legal obligation to support the poor from other localities who on occasions of famine flock to the centres of relief. They must be left to charity and to the Government.

7. The Famine Commissioners' suggestion appears in one place to contemplate a permanent charge on zemindars for the support of the poor. Of all modes of operation this is the system that should be most

carefully avoided; the people would just look on it as a shallow pretence for an additional tax and resent it accordingly. The charge that I advocate is incidental and local. It is not to be imposed in anticipation of distress to meet conjectural demands; but when it becomes actually necessary for the Government to interpose to give the means of subsistence to masses of the population, a due proportion of the expense incurred is to be rateably chargeable to the estates affected.

8. I believe that this would do good in more ways than one. In the first place, it would make it more than it is now the interest of the most callous zemindar to improve his estate in the manner best calculated to avert famine. Secondly, when relief measures become necessary, he would give more ready and efficient aid to the officers of Government in economically carrying out relief measures. It would be his interest to prevent waste and misdirected expenditure as much as possible, and he would take care that relief to casuals or the poor of other districts is not charged to the joint account.

9. The proposals of the Famine Commissioners appear to follow the theory and views of European origin now in fashion: first, a jury to decide if the people are in distress, then an estimate, then an assessment on the pergunnahs, and a deal more. I submit that my plan is simpler and likely to prove far more acceptable to the people interested.

No. 10, dated Chittagong, the 12th October 1870.

From—Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commr. of the Chittagong Division.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, Revenue Dept.

Having given the subject of Government confidential circular No. 2447, dated 22nd June 1870, and of its enclosures, careful consideration, I have now the honor to reply to it as follows:

2. I think there is nothing unfair or unjust in the main principle involved in the recommendations of the Famine Commissioners, *viz.*, that the land should support the poor living on it. That principle has been adopted and established in our own country, and I believe in most other countries in Europe; and I have never before heard a suggestion that the principle involved any injustice.

3. Turning to the details of the proposal in so far as specific details are given, I find it suggested that all persons holding a permanent transferable interest in the land, at a fixed rent intermediate between the zemindar and the ryots, should contribute to the poor rate as well as the zemindars. I do not think it would be quite fair if the assessment were to be confined to these two classes only. I respectfully concur in the suggestion of the Lieutenant-Governor that the State should, as a recipient of a portion of the rent of the land, pay its share, and I think that all classes who enjoy rent profits from the land should contribute to the rate, *i. e.*, all but the actual cultivators.

4. In Ireland, where a poor rate is a permanent institution, all the tenants who pay more than £4 of rent annually pay half the poor rate, the other half being paid by the landlord, who pays the entire rate in cases where the tenant does not pay a higher rent than £4.

5. I think the assessment of all who enjoy rent profits, and of all who possess a permanent transferable interest in land held at a fixed rent, even though they do not enjoy rent profits, would be suitable to this country. The latter class are often large farmers, who employ several laborers, and are better off than many middle men.

6. At a time of famine all other actual cultivators, *i. e.*, all cultivators not included in the class just referred to, would form the majority of the persons to be relieved; and when there are three or four grades of rent recipients, some of the lower grades would, on the occurrence of famine, be quite unable to contribute to the rate at the time, as they would have quite enough to do to get in themselves without their rents. But under the plan suggested Government would solve this difficulty by lending the money, and after a year or so the contribution could be made by all classes of rent receivers.

7. The Lieutenant-Governor suggests as a difficulty that the earliest and severest sufferers from a scarcity of food are not persons who can be fairly classed as the poor of the zemindars' estates. Doubtless His Honor's views on this point are based on information as to the existence of such a class in some parts of the country; but I cannot remember having observed or heard of any class sufficiently numerous to be worth taking into account in considering such a question as this that could fairly be separated from the other working classes of the estates on which they live.

With the exception of the very few employed regularly on wages of labor by the Railway and Coal Companies, by Tea Planters, the laborers living in towns (for which last class it is not proposed that the land of the district should be rated), I think there are very few of the poorest class who do not pay rent to the zemindars on whose estates they live.

There are in some districts a large class of coolies who are ready for hire on daily, weekly, or monthly wages; but I do not remember to have seen any of this class without some land. Generally speaking, employment is not sufficiently certain and continuous to render them entirely independent of the cultivation of land, and it is usual for coolies to rent not merely the land on which they built their houses, but also a rice or other field from which they raise some of the food staple of the district. They differ from the regular agriculturist only in so far that the latter holds more land and the coolies less; but there is nothing in the circumstances and mode of living of the majority of the cooly classes that would, in my opinion, warrant a distinction between them and the poor among the regular agriculturists on the same estates.

8. If I am correct in understanding His Honor to conclude that the proposal to impose a rate on the land for several years involves the assessment of a heavy sum of money, then I would respectfully suggest a doubt as to whether the Famine Commissioners intended this. I understand this part of their proposal to be directed to the lightening of the assessment, so that a very small sum shall be payable annually, and that they think the rate would be less felt if light and spread over several years, than if the rate were higher and it were levied within three or four years.

9. I think that, subject to the modifications indicated above, an Act might be passed giving effect to the general proposition that the cost of maintaining the poor should be a charge on the land on which they live. The amount should be levied by a rate of so much in the rupee of rent in accordance with the principles on which cesses and rates, legal and illegal, are levied in both the West and East. The profits of the different classes of rent receivers in the Lower Provinces vary so much, that I would merely provide that, as a general rule, the amount assessed in the rupee be paid in equal shares by the different classes receiving rent profits, but that this rule be subject to modifications by the district officer in consideration of special circumstances, or, in other words, of one or more classes of rent receivers enjoying a large proportion of the rent profits compared to that enjoyed by the other classes.

No. 72, dated the 3rd December 1870.

From—C. H. Campbell, Esq., Commissioner of the Presidency Division.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, Revenue Dept.

With reference to your No. 2451, dated 22nd June, and to your reminder, I have the honor to state that I disapprove altogether of the proposals of the Famine Commissioners, and in my opinion any such system as that sketched out in their report is, under existing circumstances, quite uncalled for, and would be unfair to the landed proprietors of the Lower Provinces.

2. First, I observe that it is stated that "the obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government, and has never, we believe, been denied by the organs of the zemindars." I can only say that this is the first time I ever heard of such a theory, and I am certain the zemindars would not for a moment admit any such responsibility.

3. The Commissioners admit the Government ought alone to deal with disasters of such unparalleled magnitude as that of the Orissa famine. Fortunately anything like extraordinary scarcity, amounting to

positive famine (such as that the Commissioners propose the zemindars should be made to meet), is exceedingly rare in any part of Bengal, and Government has never, except in 1865, so far as I know, been in the present century called on to expend anything like large sums in feeding the people.

4. The natural poor laws of the country, and the liberality and benevolence of wealthy individuals, of which in my time I have had striking examples, have proved, and will, I am convinced (particularly now that the communications have been so much improved and our information regarding the crops and the state of the markets is so much more accurate) continue to prove fairly sufficient to meet all ordinary cases of scarcity. In anything like *extraordinary* cases (even though confined to a few districts), which can only, so far as we can judge from experience, be very rare indeed, it is, I conceive, the duty of Government, which draws such a large revenue from the land, to give the necessary assistance when private charity fails, or is inadequate.

5. And surely if the crops of a district or part of a district totally fail, and the zemindars are still obliged to pay their Government revenue, and the putneedars and other tenure-holders must still pay their rent, though little or no rent may be for the time obtainable from the actual cultivators of the soil, it would be anything but a fair or favorable time to come down heavily on the landed interest of the locality for pecuniary assistance. If a cess for the poor of any district or part of a district were at any time absolutely necessary, I think it should not be confined to the famine tract, but be levied all over the country.

6. I regret there should have been so much delay in replying to your letter. Being treated as confidential, it got mislaid; and for a long time it escaped my memory altogether.

No. 1497A, dated Allahabad, the 9th November 1870.

From—C. A. Elliott, Esq., Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of the N. W. Provs.

To—E. C. Bayley, Esq., c. s. i., Secy. to the Govt. of India.

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2791, dated the 7th June 1870, with its enclosure, on the question of raising funds for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines by a system of local taxation.

2. In reply I am desired to forward, for submission to the Right Hon'ble the Governor General in Council, the accompanying copy of a letter No. 1009, dated the 26th September last, and of its enclosures, from the Officiating Secretary to the Board of Revenue, North-Western Provinces,

containing the opinion of the Board and the several officers consulted on the subject.

3. I am to state that the Lieutenant-Governor concurs generally in the conclusions arrived at by the Board. The proposals of the Famine Commissioners would throw "the entire burden on those who are (for the time being) least able to bear even a part of it;" and as they are not of a practical nature, there would probably be little advantage in discussing them further.

4. Nor is the Lieutenant-Governor in favor of a "relief cess." The evil must, as heretofore, be grappled with as it arises. The remedy sketched at the close of the Board's letter is one which has already been acted largely upon. In the late famine, the Local Road and Ferry Funds were, to a very considerable extent, appropriated to affording labour relief. For the support of the remainder, the Government must be prepared to do whatever private charity leaves undone, the budget of each year being so adjusted as to meet all pressing necessities by curtailing other expenditure, by increasing or inventing taxation, if possible, or, in the last resort, possibly by raising a loan and spreading it over the surpluses of more favorable years.

No. 1009, dated Allahabad, the 26th September 1870.

From—The Offg. Secy. to the Board of Revenue.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of the N. W. Provinces.

From Commissioner, Meerut, No. 497, dated 13th July 1870.
" " Agra, No. , dated 1st July 1870.
" " Allahabad, No. 367, dated 2nd July 1870, with its enclosure.
" " Benares, No. 144, dated 26th June 1870, with its enclosure.
" " Jhansie, No. 786A, dated 30th August 1870, with its enclosure.
From Collector, Bareilly, No. 117, dated 1st July 1870.
" " Agra, No. 80, dated 11th July 1870.
" " Bijnour, No. 1160, dated 1st August 1870.
From Inspector General of Police, No. 586A, dated 27th August 1870, received with Government endorsement No. 1253, dated 8th September 1870.

I AM directed to forward the accompanying letters in original from the officers named in the margin, having reference to the subject of raising funds for relief purposes by local taxation. The Collector of Meerut alone, of the gentlemen addressed by Government Order No. 837A, dated 18th

June 1870, has not favored the Board with an expression of his opinion.

2. The question on which the opinion of the Board is asked is—"How can the periodical occurrence (which experience has taught us must take place in India) of extraordinary poverty and want, affecting considerable classes of the rural population, be best met?" To this question the Bengal and Orissa Famine Commissioners have replied—"By a charge on the land enforced by law."

3. The Commissioners are opposed to a permanent poor rate. "The disadvantage" (they write) "attending poor laws are so great, that we would still not recommend that resource in ordinary seasons." But they "recommend that, on the occurrence of scarcity of such degree that the population are unable to support themselves, the zemindars shall be bound to support the poor of their estates by supplying food in return for labor to the able-bodied who are unable to obtain employment, and by feeding gratuitously the helpless, unable to labor; that, in the event of their failing to do so, the officer in charge of the district shall be empowered to call together a fairly constituted jury to decide whether or not the distress is such as to require relief, and, if it is, to assess on the pergunnah the amount required to enable the public officers to afford the relief which the zemindars have failed to afford. Arrangements might be made for enabling any body of zemindars willing to fulfil the obligation thus thrown on them to do so by a self-imposed rate, and to manage both the tax and the expenditure of the money.

"It might be provided, as on similar occasions in England and Ireland, that when the rate thus assessed exceeds a certain proportion of the rental, an assessment on the district should be made, and that, when the charge on the whole district exceeds the prescribed maximum, assistance should be given from the public exchequer. It would also be fair to provide that the zemindar should be entitled to recover from all persons holding a permanent transferable interest, at a fixed rent intermediate between himself and the ryots, a share of the rate assessed proportioned to their respective shares in the profits of the land. To provide against too great pressure on those deriving their income from the land in a year of scarcity, the Government should be empowered to advance money, to be recovered as land revenue by a rate spread over several years."

4. The Commissioners' proposal is for the permanently settled provinces of Bengal. Is it applicable to the permanently settled and temporarily settled districts of the North-Western Provinces?

5. The Commissioners argue that the obligation of the zemindars, holding under the permanent settlement, to support the poor on their estates, which has always been asserted by the officers of Government, and has never, they believe, been denied by the organs of the zemindars, and which in practice has been ignored or evaded, is one which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landlord of the

country, but has been transferred with its correlative duties to the zemindars.

6. The greatest of all revenue authorities has told us that the Government is (*not* was) in fact the landlord of the *whole country*.

7. It is a mere "begging of the question" to assert, without any attempt at proof, that the Government has transferred the obligation, &c., to the zemindars. The assertion is justified not only by no precise law (as the Commissioners themselves admit), but even by no construction that can be placed on any clause of Regulation I of 1793 for Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, or by Regulation I of 1795 for the Benares Province, which declare the jumma assessed under the original Regulations for the decennial settlement of the public revenue fixed for ever. The only obligation imposed by Regulation I of 1793 on zemindars with regard to the rest of the agricultural population is to conduct themselves with good faith towards their dependent talookdars and ryots.—(Section 7.)

8. It appears to the Board that the Commissioners' proposal, which in effect imposes on the zemindars the obligation which they themselves admit originally lay on Government, is unsound. The *accident* of the Government demand representing a very small share of the rental assets, or produce of the land, at the present day does not affect the *principle* any more than the recognition by Government of the proprietor's right to transfer his interests without the previously obtained sanction of Government.

9. But even allowing that it is obligatory on land-holders, both in permanently and in temporarily settled districts, to support the poor on their estates (an obligation which must exist in ordinary, if it is present in extraordinary seasons), the Board consider the Commissioners' proposal to be simply impracticable. A vast majority of our zemindars, and especially in those parts of the country which suffer more frequently from famine, are small peasant proprietors. They are not men of capital. They are themselves dependent not only for means of paying the Government demand, but even for the means of comfortable subsistence on the character of the season. A season of drought reduces them to personal distress. The Government is compelled in frequent cases to grant large suspensions or remissions of revenue (*e. g.* two lakhs were suspended in Bijnour, and 1,00,000 remitted in Ajmere in 1868-69). In bad seasons where are they to get the "food to be given to the able-bodied poor in return for labor," and with which to feed *gratuitously* the helpless poor unable to labor? The Government cannot insist on the land-owners not selling in the best market any food grain he may have in store over and above his own requirements. Any such arbitrary proceeding would intensify the distress elsewhere. On what work is the zemindar to put the able-bodied poor? He surely is not to be asked to *make* work for them, to construct embankments, wells, &c., which he does not want.

10. The Commissioners considered that "it seemed to be absolutely necessary to localize all taxation for the poor, except in case of the most extreme calamity, surpassing every local means, and it is only in exceptional cases they would spread the rate over a whole district. Nor do the Commissioners insist on the zemindar's obligation to provide for the poor of estates other than his own. Under their system the entire burden would fall on those who are least able to bear even a part of it."

11. With reference to the remarks recorded in paragraph 69 of the Commissioners' report, the Board must observe that the question to be determined is—"how to deal with urban distress," quite as much as with rural distress. The poorer classes in cities and towns are the first to feel and the last to recover from the distress caused by the rise in the price of food consequent on present or anticipated scarcity. In all towns there is a large class who live from hand to mouth, and a larger proportion than is found in villages of families subsisting on daily wages. There is less community of interest between employers and laborers than between the landlord and his tenant, or ploughman or village servant. Self-interest alone is a sufficient inducement to the land-owner to keep alive his tenants, &c., while pure benevolence or ostentation alone impels the richer residents in towns to help the starving poor who have little or no connection with them. The employers of the poor very often cannot help them, being themselves sufferers from a common calamity. They have no store of grain like the zemindar to go upon in hard times. As long as a landholder has more grain than he wants for himself, he will assist his dependents rather than sell it at a profit.

12. The Board would invite the attention of Government to Mr. F. O. Mayne's suggestive letter, though they cannot join with him or the other officers consulted, who advocate similar measures, in recommending a permanent poor rate or formation of a famine fund in municipalities or villages. The Board hold with Mr. Mayne that the obligation of supporting the poor in times of famine lies chiefly on Government, and that Native States should not be allowed to pour their starving poor into our districts unless they assist the Local Government with funds for their support. (Some means must be devised to prevent this last most crying evil.)

13. To sum up, the Board cannot advise the imposition of a famine cess as proposed by the Famine Commissioners, certainly not a special cess on land.

14. The Board think that the new system of raising funds for local wants by local taxation will enable Government to meet the difficulty.

15. Large sums have been provided in the local budget for roads, improvements, &c. Hitherto the sums set apart for these purposes have been provided by the Imperial Government, and the Local Government has had no power to expend them on objects other than those for which they have been sanctioned.

16. The case is different now. Suppose two lakhs have been set apart for pucca bridges and new lines of road, another two lakhs for drainage works. On the occurrence of a famine, it will be in the power of the Local Government to postpone the construction of these works and to divert the funds set apart for them to famine relief works in those parts of the country where distress is most severe—the money would be spent in useful works; but in other parts of the country, where it was of importance to provide labor, as a means of relief to the starving population.

No. 497, dated the 13th July 1870.

From—The Commissioner of the Meerut Division.

To—The Secy. to the Board of Revenue, North-Western Provs.

I HAVE the honor to submit, for the information of the Board of Revenue, my reply to orders of Government (Revenue Department), No. 837A, dated 18th June, on the subject of the adoption of measures for raising funds, by a system of local taxation, for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines.

2. The Famine Commissioners (paragraph 70) are of opinion that "as respects the permanently settled provinces, the obligation to support the poor of their estates (paragraph 69) which the zemindars accepted with the permanent settlement, but which they have now failed to fulfil, should be put into practical operation, and that local taxation for the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindaree rights to be enforced by law."

3. I conclude, therefore, that the proposed system of taxation, on which opinion is requested, is intended only in permanently settled provinces.

Secondly, "they recommend that, on the occurrence of scarcity of such degree that the population are unable to support themselves, the zemindars should be bound to support the poor of their estates, &c.;" and "in the event of their failing to do so, the officer in charge of the district shall be empowered to call together a fairly constituted jury to decide whether or not the distress is such as to require relief, and, if it is, to assess on the pergunnah the amount required, &c."

4. From this I conclude that the local taxation is proposed to be made only when dire scarcity prevails, *i. e.*, in the very year the land is less able to bear additional taxation.

5. I am decidedly in favor of legislation, *i. e.*, of a poor law. But I think the recommendations of the Famine Commissioners are diametrically opposite to what should be carried out, that measures for the support of the poor in time of famine and dire distress, and of the helpless, should extend throughout all India, and that taxation for this

view should be proportionate to the prosperity, not to the calamity of the season.

6. Throughout all India there is a large proportion of the community who are dependent on charitable support, whatever the supply or price of food may be—lepers, the blind, the maimed, and the indigent sick. These, whatever the creed or religion may be, it is the duty of the more favored classes to feed and provide for with the ordinary necessaries of life. But they get only a precarious and very insufficient care, and that mainly from Christian charity. There is, I admit, a system of charity amongst the Natives, but it is ill directed. The religious mendicants—the Fakeers, Jogees, Goshaeins—strong in health and constitution, but besmeared with dirt, are liberally fed and maintained, where the leper is driven from the door. Distribution of food is, as the Famine Commissioners state, considered a cardinal virtue ; but in the distribution the Brahmins, who need not the charity, are the principal recipients—the really indigent poor (and particularly if, as is generally the case, of low caste) can at most secure the crumbs that remain. This is the charity of the wealthy bankers, shroffs, merchants, and others of the Hindoo or Brahminical religion, principally residents in the cities and principal towns of the empire ; and animals and birds are larger recipients of food than a starving man of low caste.

7. The Mahomedans on their part are charitable, but only to those of their own faith. The uncircumcised may suffer and perish, without exciting any feeling of pity. It is—and was openly declared by a Mahomedan gentleman at a meeting of the Allahabad Charitable Association to be—a duty in the opinion of Mahomedans to relieve only those of the Mahomedan faith.

8. I admit, and would not on any account deny or ignore, the kindly feeling of the Natives to their own related poor. A brother in distress by disease, infirmity, or other cause, is carefully fed and provided for as long and as far as their relations can. But the necessity of a poor law is not for these, excepting so far as to render obligatory on all their maintenance, and for such forced obligation there is, I consider, less necessity than in England itself.

9. A poor law is required for the helpless and those who have no helpers, and if necessary in a Christian country, where as a rule charity is directed to the indigent and helpless whatever his color or persuasion may be, it is certainly still more required in India, where, the Christians excepted, religion far more than proverty or real distress directs the distribution of alms. I am certain a well regulated law providing for the poor helpless will not interfere with Christian charity, or with the well directed charity of the Native ; Mahomedans to those of their own faith, Hindoos to those related or connected to them.

10. A poor law is undoubtedly one most difficult to frame—and guard it as carefully as can be, is one sure to create poor—by bringing

out poverty pre-existing, but not before revealed. It is necessary such law should provide against vagrancy and mendicancy, should empower deputation of mendicants to their villages, or districts of residence, or to the State to which they are subjects, should require maintenance by relations able to maintain and provide work for those dependent on labor for support, but unable to obtain labor and provide for the administration of funds by responsible and properly selected and constituted guardians. A great mass of the helpless poor, who are claimants for charitable relief in the British provinces, are emigrants from neighbouring Native States. His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will remember one instance, *viz.*, at Dehra, where out of 53 lepers, 48 belonged to the Tehree State. The Menjapore house in Allahabad District, during the famine of 1868-69, contained a large proportion of paralyzed from Rewah and other Bundelkund States; and the support and maintenance of these should be required from or under regulations of the Ruler of the State to which they are subjects, and to which they should be deported; so that each locality, whether district, tehseelee, or purgunnah, should only have to provide for its own helpless poor.

11. The funds to carry out the above proposals, and also to make provision for extraordinary calamity, might and should, in my opinion, be raised by a poor rate on landed or house property: the rate should be low, but extend to tenants of land and houses as well as proprietors, and should vary according to season and price of food in regard to non-agriculturists, but be at a fixed rate in regard to the agricultural population.

12. My reason for this is, that when the harvests are plentiful and price of food is cheap, the non-agriculturist benefits, whereas the cultivator, by obtaining a price for his produce lower in proportion to quantity thereof, does not, or at all events does not, benefit so much. In regard to land, I would suggest a fixed rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the revenue; in regard to estates paying revenue, and the same on rent-free properties, calculated on the revenue which would be fixed were such liable to assessment, a rate of 1 pie per rupee of rent leviable from cultivators of land would fall at about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on each cultivator, and be equal to about 1 per cent. of revenue,—the remaining half per cent. would fall on the zemindar's profits—the poor rate being thus half per cent. on all classes of agriculturists, a sum so small, it will hardly be recognized or felt.

The rate on houses or other real property owned, tenanted or occupied by non-agriculturists, I would propose, should vary from 1 to 2 per cent. on the annual value thereof, one moiety being paid by the occupier or tenant, the other by the owner or person receiving the rents of the tenants; and in case the owner and occupier be the same person, the full rate should be levied from him.

13. The lower rate, 1 per cent., should be fixed when the price of food is above a fixed scale on the staple consumed. In the North-Western

Provinces, for example, where the price of wheat is at or more than one rupee for 20 seers, when more than 20 seers are obtainable for one rupee, the poor rate might be raised to 1½ per cent. up to 25 seers, and the maximum rate of 2 per cent. when more than 25 seers are obtained. By this process I get an income proportionate to the prosperity of the season. In years of famine or distress the rate on the agriculturists should be remitted in all districts afflicted.

14. One moiety of the fund should be set apart for extraordinary or out-door relief in seasons of calamity, and credited to a Provincial Fund, applicable to any part of the province and administered by officially appointed managers.

The other moiety, I would propose, should form the Poor Law Fund of the district from which realised, to be applied for the maintenance of asylums for the leper, the blind and maimed—the maintenance of the inmates of such asylums and the relief of other helpless poor—the fund being administered by a Board of Guardians, of which the Natives should form the majority, but of which the District Officer should be President, and a few other Europeans *ex-officio* members. No Clergymen should be appointed, as the measures above related should be exclusively for the relief of the Native poor, and the Natives will regard with suspicion and dislike any religious element.

15. I have considered this subject, on the supposition that local taxation will not be confined to permanently settled provinces, but be of universal application. I cannot devise any system which will work over small areas or defined localities, which shall be of any practical application, either for casual relief or to meet occasions of dire distress, and I cannot see on what grounds a law enforcing local taxation could be justly applied to one class of landed proprietors only.

16. I cannot recommend this, or any other taxation, so long as the present rate of income tax is demanded.

[*Confidential.*]

Dated Agra, the 1st July 1870.

From—F. M. Lind, Esq., Commr. of the Agra Division.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Board of Revenue, N. W. Provinces.

With reference to the confidential letter from the Secretary to Government, North-Western Provinces, No. 837A, dated 18th ultimo, and enclosures, on the subject of the adoption, by a system of local taxation, of measures for raising funds for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines, I beg to submit the following remarks through the Board as directed.

2. The liability of these provinces to periodical scarcity and occasional famine is a conclusion which I think may be accepted as a fact. The inexpedience for political considerations, as well as on account of the financial disturbance which follows, has been urged as a reason for withholding State assistance, and as the necessity for devising some system of local taxation to meet such misfortunes in the future.

3. Assuming then the existence of a principle why State aid should not be granted on the occurrence of such misfortunes, it is necessary, in considering the subject, to cast about for some system of local taxation which shall, at the same time that it suffices for the purpose, be as little distasteful to the people as possible.

4. There is no scheme of local taxation which is so well understood or so popular, or which falls so lightly as that under the octroi law. My proposition is then to levy a special famine rate from all municipalities in each province, to be utilized as occasion may require, only on the occurrence of distress of so grievous a nature as to be beyond the control of ordinary local charity. I would restrict this rate to say an increase of 25 per cent. on the rates in the present schedules, and I would place the proceeds under the sole control of the Local Government. Under the operation of such a rule every municipality would contribute annually one-fifth of its gross octroi revenue. The proceeds should be capitalized and kept as a fund from which the Local Government could relieve provincial distress and famine.

5. To illustrate more clearly my meaning, let us assume that the octroi revenue of the city of Agra is a lakh of rupees; it used to be much more before the prohibitive order of the Government of India was issued; at present it is somewhat less, but for round numbers, and as an illustration, let us take the above figure. All the rates on the schedule would have to be increased 25 per cent.; the incidence of this extra tax would really be inappreciable to the people, at the same time that the yield would be considerable. Under the above calculation, the contribution from the city of Agra alone would be in round numbers Rupees 25,000. Similarly the contributions from all other municipalities would in the aggregate form a very large annual income. I have no means of forming any idea of what the aggregate revenues from octroi may be for all the municipalities in the North-Western Provinces, but I take it that the total annual yield to the Famine Fund would not be less than from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 lakhs of rupees, and assuming that famines do not recur more than once in five years, we should have an ample capitalized fund ready to hand.

6. The fairness of thus throwing upon sudder cities and principal towns the burden of supporting the population may be questioned, but to any such objection I would reply that the wealth of a district is generally centred in its chief towns; and, moreover, that, as a rule, the octroi law is in force in all important towns. Another argument in favor of my proposition, so far as it touches the octroi system, is that every one

will contribute to the fund according to the consumption in his household; the rich and the poor will alike contribute, varied only in degree, and the feeling of thus contributing to a fund intended for the relief of their fellow countrymen in times of famine will be in strict accord with their sense of obligation in supporting their poor in ordinary seasons.

7. I question much the advisability of adopting any system of taxation which shall reach beyond the range of the more prosperous towns. It would be a mistake, I think, to include the smaller villages. The yield would be comparatively very insignificant, and would be wholly disproportioned to the irritation created.

8. My own opinion is that a cess, such as I have described above, would be amply sufficient for all times of need. But if it should be thought necessary to supplement this, the same principle might be extended by a fractional deduction from the municipal cess in course of assessment in districts undergoing settlement. This cess would be found amply sufficient even if half or one quarter per cent. out of it were to be deducted as a contribution to the Famine Fund, and the balance be applied for local municipal purposes. On the calculation that half per cent. were thus to be devoted to the Famine Fund, we should have an annual contribution of about Rupees 6,500 in a district the revenue of which is thirteen lakhs. This for all the districts under the Government of the North-Western Provinces would yield an income not far short of two lakhs a year. It is true the contribution from the settlement municipal cess would not be available in every district at first,—my calculation has been made on all districts contributing,—still each district, as it came under settlement, would be in a position to add its quota to the fund, and in the mean time I have no doubt the means I have sketched out would be found sufficient.

9. I am averse to the introduction of any fresh system of taxation, unless it be in supersession of some existing scheme. I think that any additional burden would press sorely on the people, and would have the tendency of provoking a spirit of discontent.

No. 367, dated the 2nd July 1870.

FORWARDS, for transmission to Government, Commissioner's letter No. 31, dated 2nd July, containing an expression of his opinion on the suggestions of the Famine Commissioners regarding measures for raising funds for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines.

F. O. MAYNE,

Commr. of the Allahabad Division.

To the Secy. to the Board of Revenue, N. W. Provinces.

No. 31, dated Allahabad, the 2nd July 1870.

From—F. O. MAYNE, ESQ., Commissioner of the Allahabad Division.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of the North-Western Provinces.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your No. 837A, dated 18th ultimo, Revenue Department, forwarding copy of a letter from the Government of India, No. 2791, dated 7th idem, and its enclosures, on the subject of the adoption of, by a system of local taxation, measures for raising funds for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines, and requesting my opinion on the suggestions of the Famine Commissioners.

2. My opinion is that, however well adapted or necessary the suggestions of the Famine Commissioners may be in the permanently settled provinces of Bengal, they are not either applicable or desirable in these provinces.

3. In the *first* place a partial famine, or even a famine extending over the greater part of a province, is no longer only local in its effects. A system of railways, canals and improved communications have rendered interchange of grain and supplies easy all over the country, so that the pressure is felt equally, and effectually precludes a famine in any particular tract or district of the North-Western Provinces being entirely local in its effects. A famine in Bengal affects prices in the North-Western Provinces, and *vice versâ*. It may be different in an inaccessible district like that of Orissa; but in the North-Western Provinces no similar condition exists.

Secondly.—I cannot conceive why famine relief should be a charge on the land only. Any addition to the land tax, or any advance from Government for the purpose, recoverable on land revenue by a rate spread over several years, would simply be regarded as a breach of contract made at settlement.

Thirdly.—If local taxation is legalized for relief in time of famine, surely towns should bear their portion of the burden as well as landholders. The greater portion of the destitute come from the towns and cities, where the people are less self-interdependent and less capable of withstanding calamities of season.

Fourthly.—It is not the local rural population of an affected tract who for the most part require relief. Native landholders do as a rule support their own tenants in time of famine as long as they are able to do so. But it is the thousands of people from Native States and other affected districts who wander all over the country with their families and herds of cattle in search of food. It surely is not fair to tax landholders for the support of these wanderers, with whom they have no concern. People from Rajpootana wander through Ajmere. The support

of these people cannot justly be thrown on the zemindars of Ajmere. Thousands of half-starved creatures travelled last year from distant parts into Rohilkhund. You would not tax the zemindars of Rohilkhund, or of the lands adjoining the roads along which they passed, to support them.

4. The question is a difficult one, on which there may be many diverse opinions, but its solution is certainly not to be found in making the cost of a famine a charge only on the land enforced by law; moreover, to raise a poor rate to relieve extraordinary poverty and want affecting the majority of the rural population would, I think, go far to check private charity.

5. Government are the great landholders of the country, and the obligation of affording relief in times of famine rests with them, and relief can be better administered through them than in any other way. In times of most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people, I would allow Government to recoup itself, not by partial taxation on land only, but by a general tax on the whole country. I would maintain a permanent annual income tax of 1 per cent. for general purposes of improvement, and in times of dire necessity, caused by famine, the tax might be raised to 2 or even 3 per cent. A famine is no longer a local but a national calamity, and for that reason a relief tax should be general.

6. I would also enact by law that, in all towns in which local taxation of any kind has been introduced, a certain portion of the annual income should be set aside annually, and they should keep it as a fund for relief of *their poor* both in ordinary times and in times of famine and dearth. Beyond this the present system, under which Government supply employment to all able to work, and grant an equal amount for relief to the helpless to that contributed by private charity, is all that is required. I would, however, advise that Native States should be compelled to support and relieve their own poor in times of famine.

No. 144, dated the 26th June 1870.

From—W. A. Forbes, Esq., Offg. Commr. of Benares.

To—The Secy. to the Govt. of the North-Western Provinces.

I have the honor to offer the following opinion on the subject of your confidential letter No. 837A, dated the 18th instant.

2. The ever-recurring drain upon the Imperial revenues, caused by the constant liability of India to famine, and the proved insufficiency of private charity to meet such occasions, have forced upon us the question as to whether a law should be framed legalizing the temporary imposition of a poor rate upon such famine-stricken tracts.

3. The Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866 have, in their general report, brought this question forward, and writing, as it is supposed of those Provinces only, have described the marked changes which are there affecting the relative conditions of the several social classes.

4. I think every one who has had experience of Northern India will agree that the same revolution in society is going on here, and advancing, perhaps, with even more rapid strides.

5. The ties of personal inter-dependence between the rich and the poor, the employers of labour and the labourers, are already loosened. The feudal state of dependence of the individual members of clans towards their chiefs and headmen—the feelings of brotherhood amongst themselves—has passed and gone. Even families are divided, and each man now stands alone.

6. District officers can tell, and statistics can show, how seldom in these days the transfer of an insolvent puttee or holding to others of the same community can be effected to save the land from sale. Strangers they will unite to keep out of an estate, but only by claiming the right of pre-emption, or by intimidation.

7. Statistics will also show the extent to which small holdings are being sold up in execution of decrees, civil and revenue. The owners of such small holdings are all fast going to swell the number of labourers on fixed wages, and of tenants-at-will, whose rents, as the Famine Commissioners describe them, are regulated on commercial principles.

8. I for one should not fear any evil results from such a change, if it was not that our revenue system, with its tenant protection laws, by raising up antagonism between landlord and tenant, is driving us faster than the natural law of political economy can provide for.

9. It is not difficult to imagine what would have happened in Northern India during the last year or two, had it not been for the canal and railway systems combined on the one hand, and the vast wealth showered on the labouring classes by the great public works carried on since the year of mutiny and rebellion on the other. The former aided the farmer to produce and send his supplies to the best markets. The latter has enabled the poorer classes with fixed wages to buy and live.

In proof of this let the circumstances and results of 1860-61 and of 1868-69 be compared together.

10. Such being the state of affairs, certain in the present, and we may say equally certain in the future, it remains for us to consider how the anticipated evils may be dealt with and avoided. The Government cannot afford the drain on its resources; private charity fails to meet the demand; the poor must not and shall not starve. Such is the position.

11. Without doubt the proper course open to us is to make the wealthy, and those whom we may describe as the non-agricultural holders of land, and the trading classes, whose numbers are increasing and

enriched under the state of things existing, pay for the poor by a system of local taxation.

12. The Commissioners have advanced the most clear and convincing reasons for making such legal demand temporary, that is, lasting only so long as the necessity exists, rather than by a permanent fluctuating rate as in England, lest we choke and dam up that source of aid from voluntary local charity which they describe as still working, though probably in a diminished degree.

13. They also in their 66th paragraph remark that "it would be inexpedient to encourage a too frequent appeal to the general public for local objects: these might be multiplied till the public becomes callous and the resource so necessary on great occasions might, in a great degree, be lost." In my opinion there are similar reasons, acting in another direction, which should forbid us to deal piecemeal with the question of local taxation, which is generally supposed to be under consideration with a view to relieve the imperial finances.

14. Perhaps half the impatience and want of success which has attended our attempts in late years to introduce new systems of direct taxation have arisen from the temporary and uncertain nature of the imposts. At one time an income tax, then a license tax, followed by a certificate tax, and again an income tax, differing in reality only in name, but vexing the people all equally.

15. The rich should be made to pay for the poor, but the tax imposed for this purpose and for all others, the responsibility to meet which the Government of the Empire may finally determine to throw from its over-burthened shoulders, should form part of a single and well considered system—elastic in its operation—expanding and contracting as necessity arises. There should not be now a temporary and separate tax imposed as a poor rate—and then another for the police—another for education, roads, or jails. Nothing is felt to be more irritating than this ever-recurring change and uncertainty in the nature and purpose of taxes.

16. With the hope that those to whom is given the duty of devising a system of local taxation may be guided aright in their deliberations, and concurring most fully with those who advocate such a system, including amongst its objects the relief of the poor in times of extraordinary poverty and famine, I conclude this paper.

Docket No. 786A, dated the 30th August 1870.

Agreeably to the request contained in the confidential letter of Mr. C. A. Elliott, Secretary to Government, North-Western Provinces, No. 837A, dated 18th June last, Revenue Department, forwards, for

submission to Government, Commissioner's opinion and proposed draft of Act on the relief by local taxation in time of famine.

G. H. M. RICKETTS,
Offg. Commr., Jhansie Division.

To the Secy. to the Board of Revenue, N. W. Provinces.

No. 785A, dated Jhansie, the 30th August 1870.

From—G. H. M. RICKETTS, ESQ., Offg. Commr., Jhansie Division.
To—The Secy. to the Govt. of the North-Western Provinces.

I HAVE the honor to reply to your confidential letter No. 857A of 18th June on the subject of relief by local taxation in time of famine.

2. There is no doubt in my mind but that some means should be devised by the Government to meet this difficulty in future years. Our chief reliance must be on irrigation and agricultural improvements; but many years must pass before these can be productive; and in the meantime, and indeed when famine is severe in spite of all that irrigation can do, I am convinced that a starving people can never be saved, except by the direct interposition of Government. The necessity is so great that all existing laws or prescriptive rights must be made to give way to it.

3. I go far beyond the opinion recorded by the Famine Commissioners, that some reliance can be placed on, and assistance be expected from, spontaneous Native charity. I believe, as a fact, that in any reliable form this charity does not exist. Natives will support their needy clansmen and relatives, or they will yield to individual importunity, or they will feed the begging tribes in their own neighbourhood, who have a prescriptive right to eat their bread in idleness, or they will feast innumerable Brahmins, and call it charity, or they will reluctantly contribute funds when called on to do so by some influential official, when the gift is further sweetened by ostentatious publication in the *Government Gazette*, but systematic organized relief for all classes alike they do not understand, and never, to my belief, attempt. It is a fact that in agricultural villages the village serfs die off, and are as unheeded as any worn-out bullock. The village proprietor's of land, or banker's, or grain dealer's, or petty trader's charity begins at home and ends there, and it is the village population who suffer most in famine and furnish the bulk of the death returns.

4. It is difficult to suggest a remedy that would be adequate to meet the demands of a really urgent extensive famine. I suggest measures which I would apply without hesitation, for I believe almost any lengths are justifiable to obtain the mastery over famine, and I do not see that so great an end can be obtained but by some great and comprehensive measures.

5. The land must bear the brunt of all schemes for relief from famine. I should think it would be possible in all new settlements to squeeze out an extra one per cent. as a famine cess, to be faithfully kept by Government as a reserve, as an insurance fund against famine, to be spent only, under the orders of the Local Government, on the agricultural population, in seasons of undoubted distress.

See Clauses 1 and 2 of proposed draft of Act.

6. I am induced to make this suggestion, for I believe in most instances where the settlement statistics of newly settled districts have been published, the estimated produce is below the actual average outturn, and there would be room for the increase I advocate. Notably, I may instance Goruckpore. If the published statistics of Goruckpore are true (they were published in the *Friend of India*, and I presume were extracted from authentic sources) in every season, which is one-eighth below the average in productiveness, the population must be supported by grain imported from abroad. This must be incorrect. There is room here for the cess I suggest.

7. This would furnish a fund, if there was a fair start, if there were four or five propitious seasons, which would go far towards mitigating the costs of any ordinary famine.

8. *Clause* 4.—In five years there would be an accumulated insurance fund of 19½ lakhs* in the North-Western Provinces alone, and the Government would feel financially at ease were famine to occur in the sixth year; and if the fund was further increased by an unusual succession of good seasons, the famine cess might be suspended.

* This has been taken from the present total of land revenue in North-Western Provinces.

9. The Famine Commissioners suggest that there should be a law authorizing the imposition of a famine tax, but it can be no easy task to suggest the form this tax should take, when the Commissioners, with all their knowledge, and with the means at their disposal, from which some definite proposition might have emanated, have evaded the task of whose necessity they were convinced from their own inquiries. I would pass such a law, making the incidence of the tax more general than the Famine Commissioners suggest, for I would tax all alike whose wealth was above a certain limit, regardless of the sources of their income, but I would not allow it to descend so low as they recommend, and I would exempt all receivers of salary from the tax, for the foundation of their income is uncertain.

10. *Clause* 5.—An income of Rupees 1,000 a year represents a monthly expenditure (expenditure and income being taken as equal) of about Rupees 80 a month. A person in this position is very comfortably off. As a land-owner, he keeps his bullock, carriage, and a pair of trotting cattle, or his riding mare, and is a yeoman farmer. In a town he has a house with a good courtyard, and his womenkind and children

all wear silver ornaments. I would tax these and all above them, or rather I would hold them liable to taxation, when the necessity arose; but on no consideration would I go lower, for the class cannot be numerous between these, who, I believe, cannot only maintain themselves, but can contribute to the support of others and the lower classes who will require assistance.

11. *Clause* 5.—A payment of Rupees 1,000 a year of land revenue may be held to represent an equal sum at least accruing as income from his land to the revenue-payer. In no case can he receive less. If he is himself a cultivator, his receipts will be far greater, for he will enjoy the intermediate profits. This Rupees 1,000 of Government revenue may be held to represent at least Rupees 5,000 worth of actual produce. This estimate is as near I believe as any other that can be assumed. This rent-payer has a very large interest in the land. There can be no injustice in imposing on him a tax for the support of those by whom his own fields are cultivated, or who buy his produce. He will complain no doubt of the harshness of Government in imposing tax upon tax. We foster and encourage such complaints by our system; but I deny that there is any cause for them to any extent worth noticing, and I should be glad if our system was modified to some extent so as to check these complaints: they do no good and foster discontent amongst the multitude, though I may observe in passing that I do not think that all taxes, existing or proposed, are most in accordance with Native notions, and hence the outcry, which is owing partly to ignorance, more still to chronic opposition, rather than to inability to bear the burden.

12. *Clause* 5.—I would pass a law declaring that every person paying land revenue to Government of Rupees 1,000 a year and upwards, or whose income from other sources (excepting salaries) was shown to be Rupees 1,000 a year, or above, should, at the discretion of Government, in a year of undoubted famine, be liable to a famine tax up to 10 per cent. of his land revenue or of his income. The amount to be paid as land revenue, or as any other tax and arrears, to be recoverable under the same rules as applied to land revenue arrears, or any other existing law applicable to arrears of taxes.

13. *Clause* 8.—The case of maafeedars and jagheerdars is even more important. I would subject them to the cess in proportion to the amount of land revenue they would pay on lapse of their rights to exemption.

14. *Clause* 12.—I believe the zemindar in these provinces, who has been admitted as a co-proprietor by Government, cannot have any moral right to object to such a tax as this. Its object and his interest in it must be apparent to all. This must be the case to a still greater degree in the permanently settled districts, where, in Bengal Proper at least, the persons are five or six deep between the zemindar and the actual

cultivator. These, as putneedars, durputneedars, and other denominations, have their incomes from land, which they have never seen, but on which it is absolutely secured. None of these have ever borne even a portion of the duties and responsibilities attaching in all other countries to those who own or live by the land. This state of things should cease. Their liabilities should be established and enforced by law, so that in time of need they could be made to contribute their share.

15. *Clause* 12.—The existence of all these and their different interests could be recorded with ease under the accurate system obtaining in these provinces, and they could be arrived at by degrees in Bengal. The census could enumerate and classify in each estate the serfs and all the poorer classes, whose support would in time of famine be a charge on the estate. With this information on hand, the Government would be in a position to state, on the first sign of approaching famine, what proportion of the whole might become a charge on the estate, and what sum might be required for their support; as the intensity of the affliction established itself, $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$, or any portion of the whole might be declared as liable to support by the estate, and pressure for their support might be applied in proportion on those on whom by law the responsibility had been assigned.

16. Where the Government has retained all proprietary rights in the land in its own hands, as in Madras and Bombay, I think the zemindars, as such, should be relieved of all responsibility from contributing towards famine funds, though I would still tax their incomes.

17. This is the direct inference from the principle by which I have been guided all through the above remarks, that zemindars are to be held liable from the fact of their being co-proprietors with the Government in the land.

18. *Clause* 3, *also* 9.—And I think on this principle Government should pledge itself to spend an amount equal to whatever may be spent from funds arising from this taxation. This division of the costs would bring the principle of the taxation or cess home to the understanding of all, and would disarm all objectors. We might find ourselves in the novel position of having imposed a popular and unobjectionable tax, thoroughly well understood and well received by all parties.

19. I feel rather sceptical about the recommendations in paragraph 70, that the zemindar should be called on to feed the starving poor. As a fact, he and all between him and the starving cultivator are absentees, and before the real responsible man could be found, the famine would be on them. Then there would be evasions to overcome, and references backwards and forwards, and appeals, and what not, all adding to the evil whose ravages cannot be postponed. The Government should at once assume the responsibility of the actual support of the poor; it should

assign the works to be executed, and should organize the relief establishments, and it should call on those responsible for the cost to contribute their quota. Any other course would, in my opinion, result certainly in an enormous loss of life, though probably such loss would be positively denied by the person whose assistance the Commissioners would invoke.

20. Neither would I have any faith in the "fairly constituted jury" advocated by the Commissioners, unless they were under the guidance of competent English authority. Their ideas and ours on what constitutes distress are far different, nor are they equally alive to the necessity for its alleviation. If they were left alone to decide the point, I should be much surprised if our officers did not find themselves overwhelmed before they were warned that they were threatened; but a Native jury would be valuable under proper guidance as a means for connecting the people whom they would represent with the Government; and as they would thus decide on the necessity for taxation, they would relieve Government of the odium attendant on coercive measures.

21. I do not accord my consent to the Commissioners' proposition, that all famine taxation should be purely local, for fear that money should be misapplied. I think this is a most unworthy argument and unsound besides. The poorest districts are those which from position, nature of soil and climate, are most frequently visited by famine, and can least afford to contend against it. The richest districts are practically exempt from famine, but in times of scarcity there is a great demand at enhanced prices for all their produce, and their wealth is enormously increased. There is more reason in taxing those who benefit by famine than those who suffer from it. I contrast, for instance, this scorched up stony Bundlecund and the Doab tracts irrigated by the canals, or Oudh, where the rivers are everywhere, the water is near the surface, the atmosphere is humid, and famine is unknown. There will be fifty famines in Bundlecund before there can be one within the limits of the canals; but the heart of Bundlecund is not 100 miles from the canal country. It is waste of time to show how the one must benefit by the other's calamity. The trifle the former might be called on to contribute would be but a fraction of their profits resulting from the sufferings of their less favored neighbours.

22. It may be said that I have proposed taxation of a most sweeping nature. I reply that though I have suggested means for admitting of very heavy taxation still only a fractional portion of it need at any time be enforced, and I recognize the difficulty and the necessity of dealing with famine as inferior only to those that could arise from internal rebellion or from foreign invasion.

23. In the spirit of these remarks, then, I would enact according to the draft herewith submitted.

Proposed draft of Act to legalize taxation for relief in famine.

WHEREAS it has been found expedient to establish the joint responsibility of the Government and of zemindars and others deriving their incomes from land, and other persons, in the support of the people during periods of famine, and to this end establish a famine fund, it is enacted as follows:

1. *Para.* 5 *of letter.*—That one per cent. shall be added to the land revenue assessments of all districts in the North-Western Provinces (Punjab and Oudh?) whose revised settlement assessments have not been confirmed by the Government.

2. *Para.* 5 *of letter.*—That this one per cent. shall form a fund to be called "The Famine Relief Fund," which the Government pledges itself shall never be expended, excepting directly to feed the starving poor in times of famine.

3. *Para.* 18.—That the Government, as the supreme landlord, pledges itself to contribute from the general revenues of the country a sum equal to the amount that may be drawn from the above fund to be expended for the same purpose.

4. *Para.* 8.—That should famine not occur, and there be no demands on this fund for a period of (say seven) years, when the fund has accumulated to* lakhs, the Government pledges itself to remit this one per cent. cess until such time as the fund may be reduced to below lakhs, in which case the Government reserves to itself the right to impose the cess again, until the fund again amounts to lakhs.†

* Being the approximate cost of a famine equalling the cost of 1868-69 and a margin over.

† Being the assumed limit necessary.

5. *Paras.* 10 *to* 12.—That in these districts in the North-West Provinces (and Punjab and Oudh, Central Provinces and certain parts of Bengal?) where the settlement Government jummas have already received the sanction of Government, in lieu of the above one per cent. cess, the Government imposes on all land-owners paying Rupees 1,000 a year of land revenue and upwards, a liability to pay in any one year, a sum not exceeding 10 per cent. of the sum for which they are liable as land revenue. The sums thus collected to be expended as above directed in Clause 2.

6. And the Government in this case also enters into the same obligations as stated in Clauses 3 and 4.

7. *Para.* 12.—That all whose incomes from other sources than land, excepting salaries, exceeds Rupees 1,000 a year, shall be liable to a similar tax up to 10 per cent. of their incomes, for the same purposes as above stated in Clause 3, and in this case also there shall be an agreement on the part of Government as stated in Clauses 3 and 4.

8. *Para.* 13.—That all Maafeedars, enjoying a maafee of Rupees 500 a year, or above that sum, and all Jagheerdars, shall be liable to pay a similar tax up to 10 per cent. of the sums which are remitted to them, and which they would be called on to pay as land revenue, where their exclusive rights and privileges to be resumed.

9. *Para.* 18.—That in this case also the Government binds itself to contribute an equal sum as stated in Clause 4.

[Or there might be one comprehensive clause containing the obligations of Government.]

10. That the amount of such demands shall be settled by the Collector, or any duly authorized person under the Collector, from whose decision there shall be no appeal, excepting in cases where the assessment is above Rupees 2,000, in which case there shall be one appeal permitted to the Commissioner within one month of the date of the assessing officer's order, and the Commissioner's order shall be final.

11. That person shall be pronounced "duly authorized" for the purposes of the last Clause whose name shall have been published in the Government Gazette of the Province to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Or they could be described by their titles,—Paras. 14 and 15.

12. That in the permanently settled districts proprietors of every denomination in the land, or who derive an income, other than a cultivator's, from the land, as long as that income is above Rupees 1,000 a year, shall each and all be liable to an assessment sufficient to meet all the costs, less one-fourth of whatever measures the Government may think fit to sanction for the support of the starving people.

13. That the Government shall contribute the one-fourth noted in the last preceding Clause.

14. That that district or tract of country shall be considered famine-stricken and liable to the provisions of this Act, which may have been declared to be so by the Government, and which declaration shall have been published in the Government Gazette of the Province.

15. That the provisions of this Act regarding liability to taxation shall be in force whenever the Government has certified that the necessity for enforcing the Act has arisen, and has published a Notification to that effect in the Government Gazette of the Province.

16. That all acts of Government servants done in good faith under this Act, or in the belief that the acts were in accordance with the provisions of this Act, shall be legal acts, but shall be liable to revision by an order of Government.

G. H. M. RICKETTS,

Offg. Commr., Jhansie Division.

No. 117, dated Bareilly, the 1st July 1870.

From—E. Colvin, Esq., Officiating Collector of Bareilly.

To—The Secretary to the Board of Revenue, N. W. Provinces.

In accordance with the directions contained in Officiating Secretary to Government's letter No. 837A, I have the honor to submit the following remarks regarding measures for raising funds for relief purposes by local taxation on the occurrence of famine.

2. The Famine Commissioners propose—

1st.—To allow ordinary poverty to be met by ordinary charity.

2nd.—To charge the land with cost of extraordinary poverty affecting considerable portions of the rural population.

3rd.—To meet extreme famines from imperial resources and appeals to the public.

3. The adoption of these proposals generally seems equitable to all classes.

4. The second however is the one on which suggestions and remarks are invited.

5. The question appears to be—is special legislation advisable for the carrying out of this proposal?

6. And if so, what is the best method to be adopted?

7. The recurrence of times of want and scarcity is inevitable, and when they come, the evil must be met.

8. It is to be trusted that in these provinces it may never happen "that the mass of the peasantry must either become laborers for hire, or tenants-at-will, whose rents are regulated on commercial principles." Such a state of things would be Ireland, without the safety valve, emigration.

9. However, there is undoubtedly a continued and steady action on the part of the landlords to remove the tenants' rights. It is only natural it should be so. Continued peace must be followed by an increase in population and competition for land, and competition in this country is not one of capital, but if allowed to go far enough, one of simple hunger. The less the tenant and landlord's interest combine, the more the object on the part of the landlords to support their dependents in a crisis will decrease, but it is undoubtedly the landowner's duty in such a crisis to do so; and as the natural tie is weakened, it becomes necessary to strengthen the legal obligation.

10. The Commissioners are of opinion that "town charity will suffice for the town population." The facts on which this faith is founded are not stated. It is not borne out by the experience I have had of two famines within ten years.

11. It being obvious that the classes among the labouring town population most likely to suffer under sudden pressure are under our system of Government certain to increase, and as the tendency of our rule is to weaken the bonds of mutual dependence in the rural classes, the adoption of some plan intermediate between private spontaneous charity and recourse to imperial revenue becomes necessary.

12. It remains to consider the method.

13. As regards the rural population, the landlords being considered primarily liable, the following plan appears to possess advantages superior to those advocated by the Famine Commissioners.

14. A cess to be fixed hereafter (probably 8 annas per cent. on the revenue will be more than ample) might be annually collected and formed into a poor fund.

15. This should be allowed to accumulate till necessity for extraordinary expenditure arose.

16. A cess so paid would rapidly accumulate into a large sum of money.

17. The payment being gradual would be less felt by the payers.

18. An extraordinary and suddenly imposed rate in times of famine or distress would press far more heavily on the landlords, coming at a season when distress rendered the collection of rent difficult or unadvisable, while distress was straining their expenditure both by private charity and increased cost of living.

19. This poor fund might be managed similarly to other local funds by committees of Native landlords, supervised by local authorities and responsible to Government, without whose sanction no expenditure would commence.

20. Government would always be in a position to know what resources it had available to meet such emergencies.

21. The principle of putting by a small saving in good years to meet the wants of bad ones appears just.

22. The accumulated cesses would rapidly mount and form a large sum of money. On distress occurring, the exhaustion of this fund might fairly be considered as the point when recourse must be had to imperial funds and appeals to the public.

23. If the fund accumulated too largely, the cess could be reduced; at all events some such system as has been here sketched is far preferable to a sudden and probably heavy assessment of a district at a time when distress has rendered it least capable of meeting such a demand.

24. As regards the town population, the obligation on the richer to feed the poorer town people is not so clear. In land it passed with the property in land to the grantees.

25. At the same time it is anomalous that municipalities should pass bye-laws punishing begging, and make no provision for the support of their hopeless poor, who, as in the case of lepers, have no other means of livelihood.

26. In this case the most expedient course appears to be to allow such bodies to collect legally a rate, the proceeds of which are to be placed in a "poor fund."

27. The election of the method might, under certain restrictions, be best left to them, but the responsibility of doing it thoroughly should be most clearly demonstrated.

28. Under this system a sum of money levied from those properly responsible would be stored.

29. The collection would be easy and not expensive.

30. The pressure would never be extraordinary.

31. The available resources would be well ascertained.

32. The husbanding and expenditure would be primarily through a *quasi* representative agency acting under Government control.

No. 80, dated Agra, the 11th July 1870.

From—H. W. Dashwood, Esq., Collector of Agra.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Board of Revenue, N. W. Provinces.

With reference to the orders of Government, No. 837A, dated 18th ultimo, on the subject of the adoption, by a system of local taxation, of measures for raising funds for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines, I have the honor to submit the following remarks.

2. The Orissa Famine Commissioners, mindful of the evils attendant on State help and of the necessity of avoiding too frequent appeals to general charity, propose to alleviate distress caused by local or partial famine by a system of taxation of the local agricultural interest. They appear to think that distress in towns can be met by private charity, but they propose to make rural distress a charge on the zemindars.

3. Whatever may be the legal obligation on zemindars in the matter of supporting the poor of their estates under a permanent settlement, I apprehend that in these Provinces this obligation cannot be held to attach to the possession of landed property, and that whatever steps we now take must be the creation of a new law and not a re-enactment of a supposed antecedent condition.

4. It therefore comes to a question of the policy of imposing fresh taxation at a time when the resources of landed proprietors are strained to the utmost, and that in a country where all direct taxation is viewed with suspicion and dislike. If it must come to taxation, it is better to supply it in a way with which the natives of this country are familiar, or to which by time and habit they have become accustomed, than to invent a new machinery for its imposition.

5. It seems to me that the object in view may be obtained by an increase of the rate of tax assessed under Act III. 1869, under Section 14, the "surplus (if any) may be applied by the Local Government, at its discretion, to the sanitary improvement of the district or to any other useful purpose therein." I think the surplus might be invested in the public funds or in the Savings Banks, which will be established under the recent orders of the Supreme Government, and expended as occasion might require in times of famine and distress.

No. 1160, dated Bijnour, the 1st August 1870.

From—J. C. Colvin, Esq., Offg. Collector of Bijnour.

To—The Secy. to the Board of Revenue, N. W. Provinces.

In reply to the letter quoted in the margin, adverting to measures to be employed for raising funds for relief purposes on occurrence of famines, I have the honor to make the following remarks.

No. 837A, dated 18th June 1870, from Officiating Secretary to Government, North-Western Provinces, with enclosure.

2. In the first place I think that the system proposed for Bengal could not be carried out in the North-Western Provinces, where, generally speaking, landed proprietors have neither such extensive estates, nor are so wealthy as in the older province. This seems to me to have been conclusively proved last year in this district, which perhaps has a larger number of great proprietors than many other districts under this Government, since one instalment of revenue was wholly suspended and another collected six months after it was due. If this course was imperative, it appears unlikely that the land-owners had such surplus stores as would have supported the poor on their estates.

3. That the pure laboring class (Chumars), weavers and such like, are those on whom famine falls most severely admits, I think, of no doubt; and certainly the experience we had last year at Bijnour proved no exception, as it was found that laborers greatly preponderated, and after them weavers and the lower classes of Mahomedans flocked most to the relief works, while the number of agriculturists who came was very small indeed.

4. The number of what I consider the hand-to-mouth classes (see margin) is very great, nearly one-sixth of the whole population according to last census; and though I don't say that all these would require relief in time of famine, or that the famine would be universal over the

Total population of North-Western Provinces.	Laborers.	Weavers.	Dyers.	Printers.	Spinners.	Cotton cleaners.	Total.
30,110,615	3,824,956	871,898	51,244	28,934	24,393	153,943	4,955,368

North-Western Provinces, yet I fear that, on the occurrence of the calamity, a large proportion would have to be provided for.

5. How is such a multitude to be preserved from starvation? It might be accomplished by raising a fund in good years to meet the demand that would arise in times of scarcity and distress, but who are to be the involuntary subscribers to this fund and how is it to be raised?

6. It has been suggested to me that such a tax should be, as much as possible, laid on those who would receive relief, and who would most benefit by the money thus collected, and that a tax so raised might act as a check on population where a check is most required.

7. These views in themselves are sound, but the only way to realize a tax of the kind proposed would be by a capitation or house tax. The former is open to several objections, among them may be mentioned the undoubted hardship that it would entail, however lightly assessed, difficulty in collection, and the fear that the tax would in reality resolve itself into one on employers, and so in a great measure would defeat its own object. The matter of house taxation being now under the consideration of Government need not here be discussed; it is sufficient to remark that under it a large number of the very poor must remain unassessed.

8. My own view of the matter is that it is not practicable or at all events expedient at this time when people's minds are so disturbed by hearing of fresh modes of taxation to increase that feeling by introducing new proposals for future contingencies.

9. The spread of irrigation schemes and of good communications will be found the best preventives against famines. If they do arise, Government must, I think, be prepared to spend money in saving lives by setting on foot thoroughly well organized reproductive works. Subscriptions should at the same time be asked for from all districts; and unless those, in which the distress is slight or non-existent, fairly responded to the call, they might be assessed at a small percentage on profits, say over Rupees 100 per annum. These subscriptions should relieve Government materially in, at all events, the support of the non-working poor.

10. It might, perhaps, be arranged that, when the contemplated house tax is raised, a portion should be set aside as a fund for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines; but as it is not known exactly to what purposes the house tax is to be applied, the suggestion must be taken for what it is worth.

No. 586A, dated Nynee Tal, the 27th August 1871.

From—C. P. CARMICHAEL, Esq., Inspector General of Police, N. W. Provs.

To—The Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of the North-Western Provinces.

REFERRING to your No. 837A, dated 18th June last, requesting my opinion on the suggestions of the Famine Commissioners for raising

funds for relief purposes on the occurrence of famines, I have the honor to state that I regret that I cannot bring myself to see the question in the same light as those officers do.

2. In years of famine and distress no people suffer so much as the landed proprietors. It is a mistake to suppose that they do not help their tenants. On the contrary, they often forego their just claims in order to retain these tenants on their lands, knowing full well that the prosperity of an estate is dependent on the location of agriculturists. To impose a poor rate, therefore, on these landholders at such a crisis, in addition to the revenue for which their estates already stand hypothecated, would, I conceive, be an act of great injustice.

3. It is well known to all collectors of land revenue that mortgages and other temporary alienations of landed property are most numerous in years of famine and distress. Were landholders to rack-rent their tenants on these occasions, such would not be the case.

4. For great calamities of this nature exceptional measures must undoubtedly be resorted to. But let such be initiated first by Government in remitting or suspending the Government demand, and we can then with justice call on the landed proprietary body to come forward and support us in all measures of charity and benevolence.

5. If we have helped them at times, they have not been ungrateful. It should be remembered how nobly and liberally they came forward with aid to the Lancashire Relief Fund.

No. 109, dated Lahore, the 14th February 1871.

From—L. H. GRIFFIN, ESQ., Under Secy. to the Govt. of the Punjab.

To—A. O. HUME, ESQ., C. B., Offg. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

I AM directed by the Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor to reply to your letter No. 2792, dated 7th June last, with which you forwarded a copy of certain suggestions by the Famine Commissioners, requesting the opinion of His Honor thereon.

The delay which has occurred in replying to the letter in question has been caused by the desire of the Lieutenant-Governor to obtain from the most experienced officers in the Province an expression of their opinions on the suggestions of the Commissioners.

2. I am desired to forward a memorandum by the Financial Commissioner of the Punjab, in which the Lieutenant-Governor generally concurs, and which points out very

clearly the different conditions under which the people of the Punjab and Bengal live, and the different position which they occupy towards the Government.

3. After the most careful consideration of the suggestions of the Commissioners, the Lieutenant-Governor would entirely deprecate the imposition of any general poor rate in the imposition of any local taxes for the relief of distress at the time when the distress exists. But it appears to His Honor perfectly reasonable that any sums which have been expended by the Government in relieving distress should be gradually repaid by the people when the period of distress has passed away, and that the Local Government should have the power by local taxation to recover such sums, imposing—

(*a*)—a special cess on land,

(*b*)—a tax on municipalities, suitable remissions being made in case many of the persons relieved were foreigners, as was the case during the famine of 1869, when immigrants from Rajpootana largely swelled the number of paupers.

The recovery of the sums advanced by Government should be spread over a sufficient number of years to prevent any hardship to the people. Nor should the recovery be commenced until such time as the people were able to bear the taxation without distress.

4. The Hon'ble the Lieutenant-Governor is of opinion that the power to impose such local taxation would lessen the natural reluctance of Government, on financial grounds, to interpose in times of scarcity, and as its imposition might be in consultation with the people, they would readily acquiesce in a measure calculated to relieve them in the time of their greatest distress.

Memorandum by R. E. EGERTON, ESQ., *Financial Commissioner, Punjab, on the proposal to provide for famine expenditure by a special cess upon landholders.*

THE question upon which opinions are called for is the best mode of providing for severe local distress by local taxation.

The subject was brought forward by the Commissioners on the famine in Bengal and Orissa, and I proceed to consider it from the point of view in which it is presented by the Commissioners in the extracts from their report which have been forwarded with the circular. In paragraph 69 it is assumed that in towns the charity of the inhabitants will suffice generally for the relief of local distress. This view is generally supported by experience in the Punjab, and there is no doubt that, for the poor of the towns only, the charity of the towns-people will generally provide food, except in cases of very unusual calamitous scarcity, against which it is not intended that local resources alone should provide.

The question of special local taxation in towns, for the purpose of relieving the poorer inhabitants, does not, therefore, come under consideration here.

As stated in paragraph 69—

"The question is how to deal with rural distress." The Commissioners propose in paragraph 70 a method for assessing upon "the pergunnah the amount required to enable the public officers to afford the relief which the zemindars have failed to afford."

This is a proposal founded upon a state of land tenures, differing entirely from that which exists in this Province.

The Punjab is emphatically a country of cultivating proprietors, where rents or the profits of non-cultivating proprietors are smaller probably than in any other part of India.

An inspection of Statements XXXIII. and XXXIV. of the Annual Revenue Report of 1868-69 shows that, while there are 2,139,912 proprietors, there are only 378,997 tenants with right of occupancy, and 1,232,467 tenants-at-will. Deducting from this total of 3,751,376 persons 3,661 zemindars of the landlord type, who from the size of their estates may be supposed not to cultivate themselves, we have remaining 3,747,715 cultivating proprietors and tenants occupying 20,168,320 cultivated acres (reduced from area statement, 1868-69), giving on the average 5·4 acres to each cultivator.

In such a state of land tenure as this it is evident that a very large majority of proprietors are not in better circumstances than most artizans, and very little better than day-labourers. There is certainly no such marked accumulation of wealth in the hands of proprietors of land as to warrant the imposition of any special tax or rate upon this class.

The income tax returns show that the total number of landholders assessed was 4,851, who paid Rupees 84,421, of these a considerable number probably were jagheerdars. As a matter of fact, so long as there is food and fodder for cattle in a village, the whole of the inhabitants are maintained in the village; when a scarcity comes

which originates from drought, want of fodder and short crops, which exhausts the food stores of the poorest, and makes those who are better of in the village refuse to support their poor, then a state of things has arrived which brings even those of the agricultural classes who are best of into great distress. So far from being able to help others, they require help themselves, and they receive it from Government indirectly in the form of remissions and suspensions of revenue, by which they are enabled to devote the sums which would otherwise be paid to Government to their own necessities. Believing, as I do, that there is very little wealth as yet amongst the agricultural classes in the Punjab, that what there is, is held by a very large number of persons, and that the difference in condition between the proprietors of land and the labouring classes is small, I am quite unable to recommend any system of laying a charge on the proprietors of land for the support of the poor.

If any such system were tried here, it would, in my opinion, result in Government being obliged to increase the remissions of revenue, and this would be merely another way of making the Government pay for the poor.

Supposing the distress to be partial and local, it would of course be possible to impose such a tax in Districts which were not suffering from scarcity, but such a plan would not carry out the principle, which is recommended in this correspondence, of raising local funds to meet local distress. It would not be fair to tax Hushiarpore and Jullundhur for the relief of distress in Kurnal and Sirsa; there would be no special propriety in taxing the landholders only in those Districts, at any rate, and, if a special rate were levied, it should be levied in such a way as to reach the purses of all those who are able to pay, and should not be laid upon the proprietors of land only.

No. 4032, dated Lucknow, the 13th August 1870.

From—H. B. Harington, Esq., M. A., Offg. Secy. to the Chief Commissioner, Oudh.

To—E. C. Bayley, Esq., C. S. I., Secy. to the Govt. of India.

In forwarding the annexed copies of opinions of the Financial Commissioner and Commissioners of this Province on the points raised in your confidential letter as per margin, I am directed to express the hearty concurrence of the Officiating Chief Commissioner in the general principles laid down in the extract, paragraphs 63 to 73, from the report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866.

No. 2793, dated 7th June 1870.

2. Although if it be true that the obligation of relieving rural distress "is, in fact, one which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country," it would seem to follow that only a portion of this obligation is transferred to the zemindar in countries to which the principle, that "the Government is not only a Government but also the chief landlord," applies. It seems beyond question clear that, whilst the relief of ordinary poverty may be left to private charity, the relief of extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the population should be a charge enforced by law.

Extract paragraph 69, Committee's Report.

Vide Home Department No. 2703, dated 2nd June 1870, paragraph 3.

3. The Officiating Chief Commissioner, however, fails to see either the necessity or the expediency of confining to the landed classes the responsibility of affording this relief.

In an agricultural Province such as Oudh, the first class to profit by rural and general distress is that of the grain-dealer and lender of money, and by them at least a portion of the burthen should be borne. The objection that, to meet this burthen, income rather than rental would have to be taxed, appears to carry much less weight than the objection that the landed classes only should be taxed whilst the money classes go scot-free.

4. It might, in the opinion of the Officiating Chief Commissioner, be well to leave to the consideration of each Local Government or Administration the consideration, as necessity might arise, of the extent to which the required relief should be thrown respectively on local, district, provincial, or imperial resources.

5. To Local Governments, under the consent of the Governor General in Council, might also be left the framing of rules of practice in accordance with general principles laid down by the Government of India.

6. The proviso that when the rate exceeds a certain proportion on the income (or the rental) of local tax-payers, an assessment on the District should be made; and that, when the charge in the whole District exceeds a prescribed maximum

assistance should be given from the public exchequer appears to be an excellent one. It will have here, for reasons already stated, twice the force which it would have in Districts permanently settled.

7. That the responsibilities of landlords, and of those who hold in land a permanent transferable interest under them, should be proportioned to their respective profits from the land, appear sound in principle. In practice it will be probably found expedient to leave to the determination of the Local Government the amount of this responsibility, as well as the limit at which taxation should altogether cease.

8. In conclusion, the Officiating Chief Commissioner apprehends in this Province no insurmountable difficulty in carrying out a well considered scheme. He would, however, prefer to see it based rather on the responsibilities of the richer towards the poorer members of the same community, than solely on the responsibility of landlords to their suffering tenantry.

Opinion of the Financial Commissioner of Oudh on the subject of raising funds for relief of sufferers in time of famine.

UNDER cover of his docket No. 2882, dated the 14th June last, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner forwarded, for the opinions of the Financial Commissioner and Commissioners, a copy of letter No. 2793, dated the 7th idem, from the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department (with extract paragraphs 63 to 73 of the report of the Bengal and Orissa Famine Commission of 1866), on the subject of instituting a system of local taxation whereby funds may be raised for relief of sufferers in times of famine.

2. The points which had to be considered were as follows:

1st.—That so long as the social feeling which dictates the sacrifices enabling the Natives to support one another may suffice, hard as the system may appear on the poor, there should be no interference.

2nd.—That the time has come when to relieve not ordinary poverty, but the wider poverty of extraordinary occasions, it is necessary to institute some system of local taxation by which the richer persons of each neighbourhood, who are best able to test the reality of local distress, may be made to bear the burden of local and partial famine, so far as local means will suffice, before, as a last resource in graver cases, resort is had to the general taxation and the general charity of the country.

3rd.—That it seems to be absolutely necessary in some way to localise all taxation for the poor, except in case of the most extreme calamity surpassing every local means.

4th.—That in permanently settled Provinces the obligation of zemindars should be put into practical operation, and that local taxation for the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindary rights to be enforced by law. On the occurrence of scarcity of such degree that the population are unable to support themselves, the zemindars should be bound to support the poor of their estates by supplyng food in return for labor to the able-bodied who are unable to obtain employment, and by feeding gratuitously the helpless unable to labor; and, in the event of their failing to do so, the officer in charge of the District should be empowered to call together a fairly constituted jury to decide whether or not the distress is such as to require relief; and, if it is, to assess on the pergunnah the amount required to enable the public officers to afford the relief which the zemindars have failed to afford. Arrangements might be made for enabling any body of zemindars willing to fulfil the obligation thus thrown on them to do so by a self-imposed rate, and to manage both the tax and the expenditure of the money.

5th.—That when the rate thus assessed exceeds a certain proportion of the rental, an assessment on the District should be made; and that when the charge on the whole District exceeds the prescribed maximum, assistance should be given from the public exchequer.

6th.—That the zemindar should be entitled to recover, from all persons holding a permanent transferable interest at a fixed rent intermediate between himself and the ryots, a share of the rate assessed, proportioned to their respective shares in the profits of the land, and to provide against too great pressure on those deriving their income from the land. In a year of scarcity the Government should be empowered to advance money, to be recovered as land revenue by a rate spread over several years.

The result of the arrangement above described, as epitomized by the Commission, is as follows:

I.—Ordinary poverty would still be left to private charity.

II.—Extraordinary poverty and want, affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the land enforced by law.

III.—The most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people would be a charge on the general revenues of the country, and the subject of appeal to the charity of the general public throughout the country.

In the last case the Government would supply employment by means of public works, and the public the means of gratuitous relief to the helpless.

3. The Financial Commissioner called for opinions of Commissioners on the above subject, and, these having now been received, a summary thereof is subjoined.

4. *Lucknow Division.*—Major MacAndrew, Officiating Commissioner, is of opinion that private charity and local taxation will meet the wants of this Province, and concurs with the Famine Commission in thinking that the Imperial Government should not be called upon to contribute until a reasonable assessment on local means has failed to meet the wants of the time. He, however, does not think that the land alone should bear the whole burden, and suggests that the trading classes, especially grain-dealers, who make money in times of rising prices, dearth, and famine, and also wealthy men who, living by the land, yet have none, be taxed. A large discretion ought to be allowed to the Local Government to enable it to bring, besides the land proprietors, the aforementioned classes under the operation of the law; and the rules that the Local Government should frame under such a law might, before promulgation, be submitted for the approval of the Government of India. The Officiating Commissioner is further of opinion that under-proprietors and also lessees with considerable holdings should be made liable to contribute, and it should be left to the discretion of the Local Government in each case how far down this rule was to go. Many of the under-proprietors and lessees of this Province are much wealthier than others who, in law, are termed proprietors, and it would not be possible to fix a just and workable scale of who should pay and who not. One village may belong to a number of co-parcenary proprietors who are actually themselves cultivating the soil; another smaller one may be held in sub-settlement or in lease by a single man, and his profits may be twenty times what those of the others are. The local assessments, Major MacAndrew thinks, should be available not only for the employment of the able-bodied, but for gratuitous relief of the helpless, and the employment of jury is not, in his opinion, desirable, as it would be a source of embarrassment. He believes that, in the character of the public officers of Government and the great pressure that would be brought to bear on them by the talookdars not to put the law in force, there is ample security that it would not be done unnecessarily, and he apprehends that, constituted as the jury must be, it would be difficult to get them to declare any necessity, such as to require relief by taxation.

5. *Seetapore Division.*—Mr. Anderson, Officiating Commissioner, concurs with the Famine Commission in thinking that the zemindars of permanently settled Districts should support the poor, as they will directly

benefit by the cultivating classes being saved from starvation and maintained in their prosperity; that extraordinary poverty and want, affecting considerable classes of the rural population who ordinarily support themselves, would be a charge on the land; that when the assessment exceeds a certain proportion of the rental, the assessments should be on the whole District; and that only in extreme cases assistance should be given from the public exchequer. The same principle, he considers, might with justice be applied to this Province; but, as the Government and the public are more directly interested in the well-being of the agricultural classes here than in permanently settled Provinces, the rate of assessment should be much lower. While in permanently settled Districts 10 per cent. of the Government demand might very well be taken in times of famine, the maximum rate here should not exceed four per cent. on the Government demand. Mr. Anderson is disposed to think that this assessment should be had recourse to only in cases of the most dire necessity, or when the zemindars do little or nothing themselves towards the relief of the poor; for there is no doubt that the assessment would have the effect of diminishing private charity.

6. *Fyzabad Division.*—It appears to Mr. P. Carnegy, Officiating Commissioner, that the conclusions of the Famine Commission, as recorded in paragraph 73 of their report, are, as far as they go, admirable, and may safely be accepted as the basis of future operations. He submits the following observations: The Famine Commission are for leaving *towns* out of their calculations; and, while proposing further to tax the land (permanently settled Districts only, however, seem to be meant), traders and the monied classes are still left to the dictates of their own consciences in the dispensing of their charity; and these are, in his opinion, oversights that require to be repaired. In seasons of famine and scarcity there is more abject misery in large towns of this Province than in rural localities, where roots and berries often support the needy. Taking the town of Fyzabad as an instance in point, last year, when prices were very high owing to exportation of grain to the North-Western Provinces, nothing was heard of real misery in the District, but the Officiating Deputy Commissioner of Fyzabad had to invoke the enhanced subscription of the public in support of the poor-house. Mr. Carnegy asks why money-lenders and grain-dealers, who mostly derive their substance second-hand from the land, are to be let off without contributing a pice to the land tax? Judging from what was said at the last budget debate, and from what has appeared in newspapers, he believes that the Indian income tax will not again be imposed to any considerable extent as a source of imperial revenue. It will probably be reserved at a minimum rate to keep up the machinery in order for times of emergency. In the Officiating Commissioner's opinion, times of war, rebellion, and famine are the only emergencies when so unpopular an impost as a considerable income tax is to be justified in this country. Assuming, then, that the income tax will not again be largely taken as an imperial source of revenue, and that the machinery may thus be

easily made available for the bay of a local tax for famine purposes (a portion of the first income tax, it will be remembered, was avowedly for local purposes), Mr. Carnegy would like to see authority being given by law to the Local Government to enforce an income tax up to a maximum of, say, five per cent. in times of great local want, of which a proportion would be considered as the income tax proper of the empire and the rest would be available for famine purposes. Keeping these principles in view, the Local Government might be empowered to introduce this tax into a pergunnah which should be the unit of area, and which, for the purposes of the tax, should include all towns situated therein and all classes inhabiting the same. This tax might be introduced when, at a public meeting attended by the officials having authority and the chief residents, it is admitted, by a fair proportion of those present, that such aid is positively required. Should the same, to be raised from the pergunnah by the imposition of a famine tax of not more than five per cent. (a percentage of which, however, will be income tax proper), be found to be insufficient to meet the absolute requirements of the locality affected, it should be open to the Local Government to extend the tax to *a whole District* in view to raising more money. Should the funds thus received from the whole District be still insufficient, the Local Government may declare the tax to be leviable from *the entire Province* subordinate to its orders. Should the funds to be raised from the whole Province also be found insufficient, it shall be the duty of Local Government to apply to the Supreme Government, who shall then give such help as the exigencies of the times may require. Mr. Carnegy further observes that there would be little practical difficulty in giving effect to the suggestions of the Orissa Committee in the manner and modified in the way that he has above described; and that he is unable to say that the ordinary poverty of Indian towns may be left to the spontaneous almsgiving of the benevolent and to the essentially Indian quality of family kindness, as he believes that charity is unmistakably on the decline. Municipal Government, on the other hand, which is only another name for sanitary improvement, is decidedly on the increase. It appears to him that the time is fast approaching when every town of 10,000 or even 5,000 inhabitants will have a municipality of its own; and the popularity of these institutions will, he is convinced, be greatly increased amongst the Natives, if to every municipality were attached a poor-house. Such institutions, with judicious management, could easily be made to supplement the almsgiving that still goes on, and that (so long as charity is believed to cover a multitude of sins) will still go on, without in any way interfering with or withering up private bounty, as some suppose is likely to be the case. The Officiating Commissioner, therefore, hopes that the experiment will, before long, be tried of having poor-houses, supervised chiefly by the Native members of municipalities and supported, in the main, on an established system, by the well directed private charity of those whose benevolence, for want of proper guidance, is now desultory and often indiscriminate.

7. *Roy Bareilly Division.*—Major Perkins, Officiating Commissioner, observes that it has occurred to him, as probably it has to most persons during seasons of scarcity, that governmental measures were necessary to relieve, to some extent, the widespread distress caused by high prices. Oudh has not suffered so severely as other portions of the empire, but there has undoubtedly been much suffering which one felt anxious but helpless to relieve. What little has been done was at the expense of local funds. The Officiating Commissioner is of opinion that when famine threatens with such severity that human life is endangered, or that the laboring classes may be so insufficiently fed as to fall ready victims to any epidemic, there is only the one grand measure of taxation to be adopted. The plan is no doubt surrounded by difficulties, but calamities of unusual magnitude can only be overcome by heroic treatment. Major Perkins does not apprehend that State contributions or taxation will wither up private charity. The very little of it that has come to his notice is not of a nature to be affected by such measures. Contributions from the imperial exchequer may cause financial disturbances, but this is a departmental consideration which should not cause hesitation in the face of the impending disaster. It cannot be doubted, moreover, that help given by the State at the proper time will avert greater subsequent loss, for the sources of revenue must inevitably be injuriously affected by a decrease of prosperity in the people.

8. Having given the opinions of Commissioners at such length, I will only briefly record my own views upon the more important points of this subject.

9. As far as possible, I think that every part of the country (say every tehsil or thannah or pergunnah) should bear its own burden of want in times of scarcity and be made to relieve the distress of its poorest class without seeking extraneous assistance either from the imperial exchequer or the public: it being provided, however, that, where famine or severe want is partial, the Local Governments may call upon the general public of the Province to aid.

10. The question whether distress was at any time so great as to necessitate the enforcement of the proposed law for its relief should, I think, be left to be determined by the Local Government after such enquiry or under such conditions as that Government might deem proper.

11. The tax levied to meet the necessities of those suffering from extreme want should be one that will reach all classes able to bear it, it being desirable that it should not allow escape to those traders who benefit by high prices. As to the extent to which this tax should be levied upon landholders, subordinate proprietors, and lessees, it is difficult to frame any general rule that shall be operative without inflicting hardship in many cases. In my opinion the land should bear

its fair share of this burden, whether permanently or temporarily settled; but the extent to which it should be taxed, and the classes who should bear it, would best be determined by local rules. As a general principle, the tax should, I would suggest, be in the form of a fixed percentage upon profits above a certain minimum, whether those profits were derived from a proprietary holding or a mere cultivating lease or otherwise.

12. As to the monied classes other than those directly connected with the soil, the tax should also be a percentage upon profits not below a certain minimum.

13. In short, my view is that Government should at present only lay down general principles; and Local Administrations, with the sanction of the Governor General in Council, should frame rules adapted to the particular circumstances of their own Provinces. One advantage of this would be that several courses will be adopted, and the experience derived from them may eventually enable Government to frame general rules.

No. 340—307, dated Nagpore, the 20th February 1871.

From—W. B. Jones, Esq., Secy. to the Chief Commr., Central Provinces.

To—E. C. Bayley, Esq., Secy. to the Govt. of India, Home Dept.

I am directed to reply to your confidential letter No. 2794 of 4th June 1870, requesting the Officiating Chief Commissioner's opinion on certain proposals made by the Orissa Famine Commissioners to provide against the occurrence of distress falling short of widespread famine by a scheme of local taxation.

2. The question raised by the Commissioners may be divided into two—

First, is it desirable that the plan which has been acted on by Government in recent instances on the occurrence of famine should be set aside in favor of a system which, up to a certain point, would throw the entire burthen of local distress on local sources?

Second, if local taxation is decided on, what form ought it to take?

3. With regard to the first of these questions the Officiating Chief Commissioner would submit that a change of principle is not desirable, and that the rule which at present obtains is as good as could be devised. Assuming this rule to be that when distress of an aggravated nature shows itself, the State provides employment for those who are willing to work for a mere subsistence, and leaves to private charity the task of finding food for those who are unable to work at all, Colonel Keatinge cannot conceive any rule of general application to be more satisfactory, if only it could be supplemented by some arrangement whereby the State could secure interest on the capital which it has to expend. Visitations of famine are after all not of frequent occurrence, and, after giving his best consideration to the subject, Colonel Keatinge comes to the conclusion that legislation is not at present required. He would, however, suggest that, with a view to define unmistakably the province of Local Governments in times of famine, it might be well to announce in an *executive* order that, on the occurrence of distress, the State will supply the funds needed to employ the mass of the people on mere subsistence rates on *boná fide* public works, while it will fall to the Local Governments to provide for the repayment of a fair interest on the capital so advanced, and also to organise all charitable work and expenditure of an unremunerative character. Local Governments thus forewarned would prepare for each District projects of works to be executed on the first outbreak of distress, and would have the highest incentive to making them remunerative in the knowledge that, if they proved unproductive, the task of providing the interest on capital expended would involve fresh local taxation.

4. It will be seen from the preceding paragraph that Colonel Keatinge would not propose to make any distinction between "extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population," and "the most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people." When distress occurs exceeding the power of private charity to cope with, then, whatever its degree and whether it affect the rural or urban population, or both, Colonel Keatinge would deal with it on the principle explained above.

5. The proposal of the Orissa Commissioners to provide for all but the most extreme distress by local taxation, appears to the Officiating Chief Commissioner to be of doubtful expediency. Apart from the undeniable hardship of imposing new taxation in a time of general distress, Colonel Keatinge is convinced—and he might cite his own experience in the famine-stricken parts of Central India in support of his opinion—that every attempt to tax the rich and well-to-do classes must produce an immediate and pernicious effect in stopping private charity.

6. The Orissa Commissioners have made the relief of *rural* distress a leading feature in their scheme, and have assumed that, except in extreme cases, distress in towns can be left to private charity. Colonel Keatinge is unable to assure himself that this view is entirely correct. It may be admitted that the effect of a rise of prices in towns is never so immediately and overwhelmingly disastrous as the utter collapse which takes place in the country when agricultural operations are stopped by drought and the whole population is thrown out of work. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the fugitives from villages at once flock into towns, clog the labor market, enhance prices, and so pull down the town poor to their own level. The Commissioner of Nagpore in his letter enclosed shows that this is what occurred in the famine-stricken parts of his Division, and Colonel Keatinge is inclined to believe that a transference of distress from the country into towns is a fact of general observation in times of famine. If this view is correct, it would appear that the proposal of the Commissioners to provide against rural distress, while leaving want in towns to the charity of private individuals, is inadequate, and requires to be supplemented by some further scheme of taxation in towns.

7. The above remarks lead naturally to the second point on which I am to submit the Officiating Chief Commissioner's views, that is, the form which local taxation ought to take if it be decided that some kind of local taxation is desirable. If town populations had only their own poor to provide for and were equal to the task, then there would be nothing inappropriate in taxing the landed classes for the

support of the agricultural poor; but if, as has been submitted in the preceding paragraph, it is in reality impossible to distinguish between rural and urban distress, then in Colonel Keatinge's opinion whatever form of taxation is resorted to, it should apply to all classes of the community, and not to the landed classes only. On this point I am to invite attention to the remarks of the Commissioner, Nurbada Division, in the 7th paragraph of the letter enclosed. Colonel Keatinge entirely concurs in the conclusion at which Mr. Low arrives that famine taxation, if resorted to at all, should take the form of, or at all events be coincident in principle with, an income tax.

8. There are other considerations which appear to the Officiating Chief Commissioner to forbid the imposition of famine taxes on the landed classes alone. In Bengal, owing to the permanent settlement and the small proportion the Government demand bears to rental profits, the zemindar is practically the sole landlord. In these Provinces, on the other hand, the malguzar takes but half the profits, and on the same principle on which the Bengal zemindar should bear the whole burthen of local distress, a Central Provinces' proprietor (including in the term every kind of proprietary right) should bear but half, the remaining half being undertaken by the State.

9. Again, throughout the Central Provinces land is available so much in excess of the hands to till it, that a landlord or proprietor of any sort who employs labor or has tenants under him is forced from motives of self-interest to support them. If he does not, they emigrate, and at the end of the period of difficulty he finds himself with his lands untilled and unproductive. Such men are in self-defence forced to expend largely when the lower orders of agriculturists are in distress, and it would certainly not be sound policy to subject them in time of such trial to any special taxation.

10. To recapitulate: the conclusions which the Officiating Chief Commissioner would submit for the consideration of His Excellency in Council are in brief as follows: that it is impossible to distinguish between urban and rural distress; that on this account, and also because of the position of the

proprietary class, the proposal to subject landholders to special taxation is inadmissible, and that taxation, if had recourse to at all, should affect all classes of the community capable of supporting it. Lastly, that in times of distress new taxation in any shape is to be deprecated, both on account of its peculiar hardship and because it is certain to re-act on private charity, and that, on the whole, the principle on which the State has interfered in recent instances of distress is, with a modification which has been suggested, as good as any that could be devised.

11. In conclusion, I am to express Colonel Keatinge's hope that should the Government of India, on consideration of all the opinions which may be laid before it, decide to legislate in the sense of the proposals of the Orissa Commissioners, the scheme for poor rating which may be decided on may be very distinctly made alternative and conditional on the non-performance of their duties by the landlord and well-to-do part of the community. A compulsory poor rate in times of unusual distress is too sure to open the way to a poor law as a permanent institution. This result may be inevitable, but at all events it behoves us to keep it at arm's length as long as possible, and Colonel Keatinge would, therefore, urge that provision should be made against applying the rate to any town or village until it had been proved that the poor of its population were starving or had been driven to other towns and villages to become a burthen on the State, or on persons not responsible for their support. Colonel Keatinge would have nothing done which could tend to divert the natives of India from the "marvellous and admirable way" in which they now recognise the obligations of mutual aid and support.

12. As directed in the 5th paragraph of your letter, copies of the opinions of the officers whom Colonel Keatinge has consulted accompany this letter.

No. 3258, dated the 27th July 1870.

From—The Commissioner of the Nurbada Division.

To—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces.

I HAVE the honor to submit my opinion called for in your letter No. 1697—161, dated the 27th ultimo, on the question of "recourse to

local taxation on the occasion of famine occuring in any District or Province."

2. In the extract forwarded from the report of the Orissa Famine Commissioners in 1866, the Commissioners adverting to the good fortune of India, in not requiring "poor laws" in ordinary times, pass on to the consideration of means for providing special funds to meet the exigency of times of exceptional scarcity; and these times they separate into two classes,—

First, times of extraordinary poverty and want affecting large masses of the population;

Second, times of most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people.

3. In the second case the Commissioners admit that no remedy certain to be complete can be found in schemes for local taxation; they think that the Imperial (or Local) Government must then come forward to help one starving Province from the revenue of others, where there is plenty, and this, I should say, is obvious. But in the *first* case the Commissioners would in all cases resort to special local taxation to relieve rural Districts, and also, where necessary, to supplement municipal and private charity in towns, which charity, the Commissioners think, would in most, but not in all, cases suffice for the support of the urban poor.

4. The exact question propounded is then probably this—How to impose this special local taxation to meet the exigencies of the *second* *(sic)* case? In permanently settled Districts the Commissioners recommend that the local taxation should take the form of a "charge on zemindari rights" within the pergunnah in which the scarcity occurred; but that, when the rate thus assessed exceeds a certain portion of the rental, an assessment on the District should be made, and that, when the charge on the whole District exceeds a prescribed maximum, "assistance should be given from the public exchequer."

5. This plan, which, as the Commissioners say, could be of no application to many Provinces in India, should be of use apparently, if introduced in the permanently settled Districts of Bengal and Benares. Even in Districts where the ordinary malgoozaree as contradistinguished from the ryotwaree is the prominent tenure, I doubt whether it would be fair only to rate the landlords. Doubtless many "proprietors of holdings, tenants with rights of occupancy, &c.," should not escape the rate.

6. But generally in countries where either the malgoozaree or the ryotwaree tenure prevails, the incidence should apparently be on all profits above a certain minimum derived from the land, and also on profits down to a certain minimum on all non-agricultural trades and occupations exercised by persons living elsewhere than in those towns

which provide for their own poor; for why should such persons escape the rural rate when they give nothing towards the charity of the towns?

7. It seems to me that a famine cess should take the form of special income tax. I can conceive no circumstances under which a tax oneach well-to-do man's income would be less objectionable.

8. And of course our maximum rate per cent. might be the same for all countries. The only difference would be regarding the point at which Government would have to step in with imperial aid, later in the richer country, quicker in the poorer ones; for, while the number of mouths to feed and the cost of the food may be considered as equal in both countries, the difference is in the capabilities or providing the cost. The rate-payers of the poorer country would fare a little worse than the rate-payers of the richer country, for the former must needs always travel up to the maximum rate quicker than the latter; but, provided that we kept the maximum rate moderate, say 4 per cent., this would not matter very much, for, after all, scarcity is not a thing of every day occurrence, and the poor are at least as charitable as the rich. And so far for the special rural ratings.

9. But I do not see why, on occasions of really great scarcity, we need separate the needs of towns from the needs of rural tracts. Generally on such occasions the towns could provide for their own poor, and a good deal more. In that case, why should not the surplus of charity find its way to the country? Sometimes, though doubtless very rarely, the towns would not have enough for their own poor; in that case, why not take help from the country? It is not clear to me either, why the wealth massed in towns should not be assessed to *this sort* of necessity in the adjoining country. The counter-argument would, I suppose, be that responsibilities should be localised. This localization of responsibility, even for *ordinary poor rates*, can only be carried out to a certain, or perhaps I should say an uncertain, extent. In England, for instance, it is found necessary often to begin with *"unions"* of parishes. The Commissioners dealing with this *extraordinary* case of scarcity would not begin with *"hulquas"* of villages, but with *"pergunnahs,"* and would then pass on to Districts, and then I suppose to Provinces, and then come to the imperial exchequer. But I would have nothing to do in extraordinary cases like this with hulquas, or talooquas, or pergunnahs, or teseelees. I would begin with the *District*, and so pass to the Province, and thence to the Imperial Government. The District, the tract subject to one Collector and Magistrate, is practically quite a sufficient sub-division in this country in the case before us. In time of great scarcity we want to hear nothing of minute local sub-division of responsibility: a great calamity has come, and the whole District where it occurs should take up the burden. I think the Legislature should give the Local Government power to impose a special District income tax for times of scarcity: the maximum rate to be say 4 or 5 per cent., and all persons to be taxed whose profits or

income is above Rupees 500. We shall always, I suppose, retain at least a 1 per cent. income tax, so that the machinery for collection would be ready. I need hardly say I do not mean that municipalities, relief committees, and non-official associations should not use the funds, and conduct relief operations (under Government direction) as before. Of course, I mean that they should do so. I am speaking entirely of responsibilities in *providing* funds.

10. Nor do I think that, by thus taxing the whole of the large and middle class incomes of a District or Province, we need fear doing away with the private charity of the towns. Everybody might not give so much as before; but there would be no soreness of feeling about a special income tax like this; and the charitably disposed would not be put off their purely voluntary charities merely because they, in common with the rest of the local world, were obliged by law to be charitable up to a certain and very limited extent. Of course, when relief operations were determined on, Government would at once advance the money from the treasury, recouping itself after collection of the tax.

11. One other reflection occurs to me—Would it savour of too much provision for the future if each Local Government collected each year with the ordinary imperial income tax of 1 or 1½ per cent., or whatever it is to be, another one-half or even one-fourth per cent. to form a fund for "times of famine and scarcity?" Famines* at the worst are fortunately of but rare occurrence, but unfortunately, on the other hand, they are inevitable; and funds thus provided and put out to interest would usually have reached a considerable magnitude when each succeeding time recurred for their use; and they would greatly aid in keeping down the rate of each famine income tax when it had to come on, forming as it were a sort of small provincial insurance against times of severe scarcity.

Extract of a letter from the Commissioner, Chattisgarh Division, to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces,—No. 3634, dated Raipore, the 19th September 1870.

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PARA. 21. Here it will be desirable for me to record my opinion on the subject of having recourse to local taxation in times of famine as mooted in the Government correspondence, a copy of which was transmitted to me with the Secretary's No. 1697—161, dated 27th June 1870. I have carefully considered all the arguments of the Famine Commissioners in favor of having recourse to local taxation, and I must say that I see no reason why zemindars and wealthy landholders should

* A sketch of a scheme similar to that which the Commissioner here refers to was submitted to the Government of India with this Office letter No. 1663—175, dated 23rd June 1870.

not, in the event of their failing to help their cultivators, be forced to do so. The zemindars of these parts generally hold their lands on advantageous terms and reap considerable profits therefrom; it is but fair, therefore, that they should be obliged to contribute to the best of their ability towards supplying the wants of their people. As a rule, however, there is every reason to believe that they have always done this, and there would be a certain amount of risk in attempting to enforce contributions which would otherwise have been voluntarily given. I should be inclined to deal with each case as it arose, especially with the people of Chattisgarh as the character and disposition of the numerous chiefs and zemindars are so very varied that measures which would be suited for some would be altogether inapplicable to others. In the Khalsa portion of the country also pressure might be put on the wealthier Malgoozars, when necessary, to make them assist the cultivators of their respective villages, but experience has shown that it would probably very rarely be necessary to have recourse to any such pressure, for the prosperity of the landholders is so dependent on the cultivators that it is of the utmost importance that the latter should be supported and assisted in every way. The only difficulty that presents itself here is the number of poor village proprietors and the abject state of the large proportion of the ordinary cultivators of the Khalsa. If taxation to meet the wants of these classes were to be had recourse to, it could only be in the form of a general tax throughout the whole country, but the great danger of such a measure as this would be in the certainty of its causing general dissatisfaction which might awaken a spirit of opposition, and lead to persons withholding aid which they would, perhaps, otherwise have liberally accorded to those more immediately dependent on them. In the course of time the condition of these poor proprietors must either improve, or they must give way altogether. Meanwhile it would seem that all that can be done is for the Government to furnish aid in extreme cases, and for the District authorities to do their utmost to enlist the sympathies of the wealthier portion of the community in the same cause. I do not think that such an appeal would, be in vain, and, in fact, under judicious management probably more would be got in that manner than by taxation.

No. 4388, dated Nagpore, the 7th November 1870.

From—The Commissioner of the Nagpore Division.

To—The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces.

I HAVE the honor to reply to your letter No. 1697—161, dated 27th June, enclosing the suggestions of the Orissa Famine Commissioners for making special famine expenditure payable by rates on the land revenue.

2. The conclusions and propositions are expressed so clearly that no recapitulation is here necessary. And I need merely state briefly

such opinions as I may have to offer, after watching the famine which prevailed in part of this Division during the years 1868 and 1869.

3. It is undoubtedly true that private charity is more liberally dispensed in towns and cities than in villages. But then, on the other hand, the helpless poor of the villages all seemed to rush to the nearest town or city, partly because charity there was more free, partly because Government works and poor-houses were opened at centres of populations, and partly because patels and village headmen would not, when they could help it, let hungry strangers stay in their villages at all. The famine of 1868-69 in Bhandara never approached in intensity to the recent famine of Orissa or Rajpootana. But so far as it went, it was worse in the cities and towns. If the rice crop of 1869 had failed, then we might, perhaps, have seen whole villages lying down to die, as seems to have been the case in Orissa and Rajpootana. And so far as we went, the want and misery were certainly worse in the towns and cities. The landholders accepted, and to some extent discharged, the obligation of supporting their own poor; people who could not get work or food in their own village migrated to the nearest town (families and all) before things came to the worst; and the old or feeble who were left behind lived on the charity of the villagers who were left. There were a few villages where it was said that the old and feeble were left to die; but I believe these cases to have been very rare indeed. And in the main want and starvation were felt the earliest, continued latest, and were most difficult to overcome in our cities and towns, and along the roads or routes leading to the centres of population.

4. If my account of our experience here is at all correct, and if it agrees with what has happened elsewhere, then it follows that grants of public money (whether repayable from rates or chargeable against the general revenues) would have to be made to towns and cities quite as much as to rural tracts.

5. Although last year the price of food all over the Division was twice the average of ordinary years, and five times the prices which ruled in the cheap days before the American war, still we got through the famine without any* assistance from the Imperial Treasury. But we all (during July and August 1869) felt well aware that, if the rice crop of 1869 failed, there would be absolutely no food at all in the country, and we should have had to ask Government for large grants to enable us to import food from Berar. And, however much we had spent, there must have been most terrible starvation and death.

* A small grant of Rupees 1,679 was made to Bhandara, whereby a corresponding sum had been locally subscribed. But we did not ask for any more such grants, as we found our local subscriptions and local funds sufficed.

6. If the catastrophe, which for a few sultry days in July 1869 really did seem to threaten the country, had occurred, I, for my part, should not have felt at all ready to summon a jury of Natives, who should decide whether or no an extra cess should be laid upon the land

to cover the cost of relief measures. I really think that on such terrible occasions there is not very much time for deliberation and discussion. In every District, if the chief officer is worthy of his post, he will keep himself aware of the opinions of the best informed Natives, and, after weighing those opinions, he will be ready to act or to move the Government to act at once.

7. Constituted as an Indian District—where there is no body of intelligent European settlers—must be, it would not be advisable that chief officers should be tied by any legislative enactment to act, or not to act, according as a jury of Native landholders might advise. If the officer is worth his salt, he will keep himself aware of what the best men think, and will act at the right time; if he is not up to the mark, and nobody else interferes, he would hesitate to summon the consultative jury, and he will not act with or without the jury.

8. There can be no doubt but the Orissa Commissioners' suggestions formulate the principles and practice of the Indian Government as it has existed for many years past, namely, that local distress should be locally relieved, until it becomes so acute as to require imperial aid; and when imperial aid is granted, it should be given in the shape of relief works. This has been the practice of Government, at any rate, ever since the North-Western Provinces famine of 1860. The new points in the Orissa Commissioners' suggestions are, that local taxation for relief purposes, either for present expenditure, or to repay loans granted for relief works, should be raised on landed property only, or by a cess on the land revenue.

9. Very possibly this principle may be correct and proper when applied to Districts where the land revenue has been permanently settled, and where such settlement has conferred an immensely valuable property on landholders. But it would not operate fairly, nor would its application be wise in the Districts of this Division, where the landlords have no very great gains, where the ryots (tenants) are in the main well off, and where the men of large fortunes and large incomes are the traders, the grain-dealers, and money-lenders.

10. The suggestions and conclusions of the Orissa Commissioners ought certainly to be in the hands of every District Officer, and they ought to be among the standard famine literature to which every officer who sees threatenings of scarcity would have recourse. But I think it would be unwise to turn these suggestions into an enactment. The Executive Government could, if it so pleased, lay down that in time of local distress imperial funds could be given as loan only, to be repaid by the people of the famine-stricken country when they might recover from their distress. If necessary legislative power might be taken for the Local Government, subject to the control of the Governor General in Council, to allot yearly grants from existing local and municipal funds to pay off such loans and to levy special temporary taxes from such classes

of the community as it might see fit to pay off such loans, the Local Government would decide within what area, according to the severity of the visitation, the special taxation should be raised, and, before doing so, it would consult its own officers and, either directly or indirectly, the chief municipal bodies and the representatives of intelligent Native opinion.

No. 297—11, dated Rangoon, the 25th October 1870.

From—CAPTAIN M. FURLONG, Asst. Secy. to the Chief Commr., British Burmah.

To—E. C. BAYLEY, ESQ., C. S. I., Secy. to the Govt. of India.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 2795, dated the 7th June 1870, forwarding a copy of the suggestions made by the Commissioners in paragraphs 63 to 73 of their General Report on the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, and desiring that, after careful consideration, the opinion of the Chief Commissioner on the general questions raised may be communicated for the information of the Government of India.

2. In reply, I am directed to transmit, as requested, copies of the opinions given by the officers consulted by General Fytche, as noted in the margin, and to submit the following observations on the several points referred to in the report above alluded to.

Dated 9th September 1870, opinion of the Commissioner of Arracan.
No. 146—2, dated 30th June 1870, from Commissioner of Pegu.
No. 31, dated 6th July 1870, from Commissioner of Tenasserim.

3. The recommendations made by the Commissioners appear to be as follow:

1*st*, that in times of famine aid from the imperial exchequer should not be resorted to until adequate relief by any other means has become impossible;

2*nd*, that in each Province a system of local taxation should be introduced sufficient to afford relief for all ordinary occasions.

4. In the permanently settled Provinces it is proposed that the tax shall take the shape of a charge on zemindaree rights, to be enforced by law, and such a measure appears both fair and equitable; but in Provinces where

Government receives its revenue direct from the cultivators, as is the case in British Burmah, it is evident that some other system would be required, as Government virtually takes the place of the zemindars, and would, under the same rule, become liable to the charge.

5. It has, therefore, to be considered in what manner relief could be afforded in this Province without throwing the whole burden thereof on the general revenues of the country.

6. In Burmah the cultivated area is $3,044\frac{5}{12}$ square miles, which is divided into 130,239 estates, and the number of holders or shareholders 370,967. This gives an area to each estate of ·023 of a mile, or only $14\frac{9}{10}$ acres, while the number of holders under Government is 12·2 to the square mile.

7. In large towns, where the wealthier classes of the people reside, an additional charge on the land occupied might be feasible, and be provided for in the Municipal Act; but in the interior of the Districts, where the cultivators are the only landholders, any increase of taxation would be impracticable.

8. A poor yet prodigal class of people holding the land directly under Government, they would in time of famine be the principal sufferers, and, in the majority of cases, it would be particularly for this class of the people that relief would have to be provided.

9. There has happily been no widespread famine known in British Burmah since its annexation, and such as had occurred before that period is attributed principally to the wars and internecine struggles that were then carried on; but when local distress has been occasioned by failure of the crops from scarcity of rain or otherwise, it has been found that the rule at present in force of exempting the sufferers from the revenue demand for the year, and carrying out some work of utility with the help of the District funds, has been sufficient to cope with the evil.

10. In the absence, therefore, in this Province of any class analogous to the zemindars of the permanently settled Provinces, General Fytche is unable to recommend that any

new system of local taxation should be introduced, and he is of opinion that for British Burmah the measures hitherto adopted will be sufficient to meet any ordinary cases of distress from famine without throwing undue pressure upon the imperial revenues.

11. There is, however, a class of land-owners gradually growing up in the country to whom it may hereafter be advisable to apply the measures now proposed for land proprietors in India, namely, those to whom, under the operations of the Waste Land Rules, large tracts of uncultivated jungles have been granted, and who will in time, it is hoped, attract many settlers to their land.

12. They are still, however, few in number, and it is doubtful whether any interference in enforcing an obligation upon them to support the poor of their estates would for the present be expedient.

Opinion by COLONEL J. F. J. STEPHENSON, *Commissioner of Arracan,—dated Akyab, the 9th September* 1870.

THE following is my opinion on the subject of the suggestions made by the Famine Commissioners' paragraphs 63 to 73, accompanying letter (confidential) No. 2795, dated 7th June last, from the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, to the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah, forwarded to me with your docket No. 297—2 of 25th idem.

2. It is important, before all things, to bear in mind, in dealing with this subject (the 63rd "suggestion") of the Famine Commissioners that poverty, scarcity and poverty, must recur. I beg to say that I think too much has been sometimes expected from the servants of Government in the alleviation of distress in times of extraordinary scarcity of famine.

Confidential.

3. Neither my opinion, nor that probably of any officer in Burmah, can be of much value as an opinion founded upon experience, famines and even great scarcity being unknown in British Burmah.

4. Under these circumstances it would be idle in me to discuss the suitability of poor laws to British Burmah, though I am not aware of the preponderating disadvantages of any poor law such as the Commissioners in their 65th paragraph maintain. In fact I may say that I do not understand their remark.

5. Granting that some system of relief may be necessary, as of course it may become, some day in Burmah, if, as the Commissioners allege, "there is reason to expect a gradual increase in the classes who may hardly withstand a scarcity not amounting to extreme famine, or in other words, if progress or civilization necessarily involves a growing insufficiency of the regular means of subsistence for continually increasing numbers of people, then it is evident that the difficulty of feeding the starving poor must continually become greater, until under the same conditions it eventually will become impossible to feed them at all.

6. The additional element of difficulty resulting from a rapidly increasing population, which is a most important feature of the question, does not appear to have been noticed by the Commissioners.

7. This is an element which may be put out of view for the present as regards British Burmah, where the population is very thin and not increasing rapidly.

8. The prospective probability of want and starvation continually increasing as the number of persons who live by wages increases, Burmah shares with India, though in a more remote degree. It is assumed by the Commissioners that all our commerce and our enterprise, our great works and improved systems, create or increase the number of laborers depending on daily wages, and that all increase of private wealth adds to the class.

9. If this be true, the time will come when there will be as much suffering from want of food in India as there is now in England—a time when a sixth or seventh part of the population does not know what it is to have regular and sufficient food, while a fifth or sixth part of these unhappy people suffer almost daily from the pangs of absolute hunger.

10. The question, however, which the Commissioners appear to be dealing with, relates only to times of great scarcity and famine.

11. For British Burmah I have to say that there is not at present any ground to apprehend such national disaster, nor have we reason to fear that, within any period which can be approximately fixed, these calamities may be expected. In any such circumstances of distress as we may have reason to apprehend, *viz.*, failures of crops confined, as they hitherto always have been, to small areas of the country affected by local conditions here and there, the remedy we have always applied and have found sufficient—a reduction or total remission of the revenue demand will, I believe, still be found so.

12. It is, of course, quite possible that it may further be occasionally found necessary to supplement this mode of relief as in the event of any disastrous inundation of the sea, such as we have not heretofore experienced. In these cases probably employment on works undertaken for the benefit of Government might furnish all the additional relief required. In most parts of the country, however, this mode of relief

would undoubtedly not be readily available: Government public works being, I may say without impropriety, carried on upon a very economical scale, few and far between, in British Burmah.

13. In any great cases of difficulty I must candidly say that aid from private charity could not be depended on; there is not much wealth in British Burmah; the whole population, as I have said, is small, and the proportion of it which could afford to give largely in charity is, as compared to other parts of India, in marked disproportion, small.

14. Yet as to any fixed system of relief going beyond what I have above detailed, I do not see the necessity of submitting further suggestions.

15. As regards the Empire in general, it is with much diffidence that I make any remarks upon the subject of the Commissioners' suggestions; yet it appears that I am expected to do so. That local taxation for the poor should take the shape of a charge on zemindaree rights to be enforced by law, where there may be such zemindaree rights, is a proposition the reasonableness of which few men in India would, I suppose, dispute, and the subsidiary arrangements proposed for carrying out this proposition appear to be sound and practical.

16. The suggestions in paragraph 71 regarding the enhancement of District rates in certain extreme cases of local suffering, the right of the zemindarees to recover a share of their charges rateably from certain tenants, and the additional aid of Government when required, also appear to be reasonable and good.

17. But it will, of course, be remembered that all the efforts alike of men and of Governments have their limit, and it cannot, I suppose, be reasonably maintained that the zemindar or the proprietor, or rate-payer of any sort, is to go on contributing his quota to the support of his suffering fellowmen until he has reduced himself to their level of poverty, or that Government is to aid until its resources are exhausted.

18. And yet it is difficult to decide where to draw the line of duty between this extreme and the other horn of the dilemma—absolute disregard of the wants of the poor and rigid abstention from relief.

19. That private charity to the poor is a weakness, a folly, and even a mistaken act, to be absolutely condemned by prudence and wisdom, and that Government aid is a criminal misappropriation of the resources of the State, is the position of the advanced political economist. The *Saturday Review* and Mr. Mill would undoubtedly deprecate any help whatever to any poor member of the community. If he is to be helped only by having his self-respect destroyed and idleness encouraged by the gifts of his richer neighbours, or by wages for work for the Government when the country does not require his work, he is a contemptible being, an incumbrance to his country, and a nuisance to society. He should be allowed to die out, wife, child, and brood. He should not be assisted even to emigrate. If he can escape from the land in which

he was born, well and good,—let him do so as speedily as possible;—so long as he remains there, he is in the way, and his death is to be desired as a public benefit, the only one he is capable of contributing to the good of his country. Pushing this theory farther than it has at present been advanced to its legitimate conclusions, it follows that so useless and injurious an animal as a poor man, woman or child, ought perhaps to be destroyed like any other useless and injurious animal. But taking the theory as it stands, it is plainly the other extreme, and it is enforced by such calm and great, though necessary, unfeeling intellects with such logical nicety and force that already it persuades many.

20. Whether, however, it is not now, and may continue to be, more painful for man and woman with human feelings to refrain from relieving the suffering of their kind, particularly the terrible suffering of starvation, and especially of helpless children, than to suffer with them at least in some degree, is a question which gives us hope that the human race may never attain that calm selfishness and supreme indifference to the sufferings of others which so strikingly characterise some of the lower animals of creation.

21. The reports I have received from two of my Districts are herewith submitted in original.

No. 146—2, dated Rangoon, the 30th June 1870.

From—Lieut.-Col. R. D. Ardagh, Commissioner of Pegu.

To—J. T. Wheeler, Esq., Offg. Secy. to the Chief Commissioner, British Burmah.

I have the honor to reply to your No. 297—3 of the 25th June, sending me an extract, paragraphs 63 to 73, from the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the famine in Bengal and Orissa in 1866, and requiring my opinion on the subject.

2. I have thought over the question of how relief of extraordinary poverty should be afforded, and I coincide with the suggestions made by the Famine Commissioners, *viz.*,—

I.—That ordinary poverty should not be specially provided for, but left to private charity.

II.—That extraordinary poverty affecting the masses in the interior of the country should be a charge on the land, sanctioned by a legislative enactment.

III.—While in extreme cases, amounting to a general famine, Government should find work and food for those who might otherwise starve, and should invite the charity of the general public.

3. In respect to the second of the above three descriptions of want for which it is proposed to legislate, I would note that in Burmah there is no class assimilating to that of the zemindars of Bengal; the people generally are small farmers holding directly under Government, and would themselves, in the event of a great scarcity, be hardly free from the suffering it would be sought to alleviate. The exceptions are the grantees of so-called waste lands, the grants of which, whether in the Akyab or the Rangoon District, have been the occasion of so much greediness, dishonesty, and interference with village rights.

4. Any law requiring the zemindars of Bengal to pay a local tax towards relieving the distress of the poorer orders should be made to extend, I consider, to this class of landholders.

5. With this exception it appears to me that the Government in Burmah as landlord will have to undertake the duties that attach to landed responsibility, which, indeed, it does to some extent at present, but in another way, *viz.*, by remitting a portion of the land revenue where any general misfortune has fallen upon any particular locality.

6. The only additional suggestion I have to make is, that where Government may be called on to assist, except in the very extreme case of *famine*, I think provision might be made for loans of *money* on the joint responsibility of those requiring such; the same to be afterwards recovered, as might be agreed on, as a revenue demand, and either without interest or at rates not exceeding five or six per cent. per annum. A great deal of help might be thus given, and in a way which would prevent the people from regarding the assistance as a degrading charity, while it would make them at the same time cautious in applying for help, except in really urgent cases.

No. 31, dated Moulmein, the 6th July 1870.

From—COLONEL D. BROWN, Commissioner, Tenasserim Division, British Burmah.

To—J. T. WHEELER, ESQ., Offg. Secy. to the Chief Commr., British Burmah.

IN expressing my opinion on the Report of the Famine Commissioners, as requested in your Office docket No. 297—4 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honor, in the first place, to state that, from my experience which now extends to 18 years in this Province, and I believe from that of the oldest man born and bred in the Province, there has not been a season when, from want of rain, from inundation, or other such cause, there has been a general famine throughout the land. The only causes of general scarcity here have been wars, either internecine or with foes from without, where, from the general insecurity of life and property, the people were unable to cultivate the soil; then till order was restored there was want, famine, and death throughout the land.

2. I refer to the wars between the Burmese and Peguans, or Talines, and to those of 1824-25 and 1852-53 between the Burmese and English. These times have passed away, and now happily for the Province, neither from natural causes nor from the quarrels of men and nations, is there likely even to be a general famine in this land.

3. As a people, the Burmese are given to charity; it is forcibly inculcated on them by their religion. There is, comparatively speaking with other countries, no poverty in the Province. In large towns, on pagoda or festival days, a few decrepid creatures, some of them blind, others lepers, some suffering from other maladies, or crippled in some way or other, are seen on the sides of the principal thoroughfares seated there and asking for alms as the throng passes to and fro. But with this exception one may go through the Province from one end to another, and not meet a single Burmese beggar.

4. Such being the case, it does not appear to me that the remarks of the Famine Commissioners do apply to this Province, still it is impossible to say that famine will not some day come upon us.

5. If it is partial, then money sufficient should be raised throughout the Province to pay for the relief of the sufferers. Here we have no zemindars nor rich classes; our population as to wealth are much on a level. The people divided into not more than half a dozen classes, each paying at different rates, would gladly come forward and relieve the starving.

According to the sum required, the highest rate might be Rupees 10, or half that sum would probably suffice; then from the last class the rate might go as low as 8 annas or a rupee.

6. In this Province, in a case of real distress, we would have no difficulty in raising money; the people without legislation would come freely forward to assist their suffering brethren; but if legislation is determined on, money might, I believe, be easily raised in this Province on some such plan as I have sketched above.

7. In a case of general famine coming upon the people, it would, of course, be necessary to relieve their sufferings by money from the Imperial Treasury.

8. I have as yet refrained from giving my opinion regarding the imposing of a tax for the poor on zemindars and other landed proprietors in India. The Famine Commissioners have, I think, wisely recommended that there should be no interference with private charity. But in the case of a local scarcity and of distress I am decidedly of opinion that the maintenance of the needy in India should fall chiefly on the landed proprietors. They hold their lands at very low rents. They now reap the advantages of our railways and canals for which they pay nothing, but for which, in my opinion, by levying a cess on their yearly receipts, they should be obliged to pay for. They apparently do nothing themselves for the improvement of their estates,

or for the education or advancement of their people, and when famine comes they look to the State to provide the starving with food. I am decidedly of opinion that the legislature should pass laws to enforce payment for local improvements and for the poor in case of a famine.

9. While on the subject of the poor and needy, I do not think it will be out of place here to touch on lepers. There are many of them in this Province. They are looked upon as miserable outcasts, and are generally to be seen on the outskirts of villages, where they reside in a miserable hut. The people of the village do not associate with them. They generally receive food from relatives in the villages, but from their company even they are debarred. They are generally not allowed to enter the villages. There is no doubt that with care and good food these creatures improve in health, their sores dry up, the canker and venom in their bones seems for a time to lose its destructive power, and a cicatrix forms over their fingerless hands and toeless feet. The disease itself has, I believe, been pronounced by medical men incurable. I am of opinion that for lepers in this Province a hospital should be provided, and that they should be placed in it. Then they would have every comfort they could wish. A return might be called for by the Chief Commissioner of the number of lepers, when I believe the necessity for the adoption of my proposal for the considerable number of them would be apparent. I have met more lepers among the poor and dirty Karens of Showelong and Myoungmya Townships, in the Bassein District, than in any other part of Burmah.

No. 3947—15 G, dated Bangalore, the 24th October 1870.

From—Captain R. A. Cole, Offg. Secy. to the Chief Commr. of Mysore.

To—E. C. Bayley, Esq., c. s. i., Secy. to the Govt. of India.

In reply to your letter* (marked confidential) on the subject of the future liability of the country to famine and the means of mitigating such calamities, I have the honor, by direction of the Chief Commissioner of Mysore and Coorg, to submit herewith as directed, for the information of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in Council, an abstract of the opinions of the officers† consulted by him, with his own views on the suggestions contained in the paragraphs of the Report of the Famine Commissioners, of which an extract accompanied your letter under acknowledgment.

* No. 2796, dated 7th June 1870.

† Judicial Commissioner, Chief Engineer, Superintendents of Divisions, and of Coorg.

2. In paragraph 72 the Commissioners summarise the result of their suggestions under three heads, with reference to which I am directed to state that—

I.—While the Chief Commissioner entirely concurs that "ordinary poverty should be left to private charity," and that any action which would endanger the existing universally prevalent feeling of obligation on the part of the heads or well-to-do members of a clan or family to assist those who have claims on them, almost to the utmost extent of their means, he considers that it is of vital importance that an accurate distinction shall if possible *from the first* be made between "ordinary poverty" and the scarcity and want, which are the precursors of failure of food supplies and ultimate famine. No doubt it may not always, in the earlier stage of general suffering from high prices of food, be easy to discriminate between such ordinary poverty and more serious scarcity; but the indications of the latter are generally to a practised eye clear enough for some time beforehand, and, judging by the past, it seems essential that, where such is the case, preparations shall be made fully and promptly to meet the impending evil.

2. In such event, the Chief Commissioner submits with deference that, to treat the first stage of so dire a calamity as ordinary poverty, in which no action was to be taken, would result in the almost certain reduction of a large proportion of the better-off classes to extreme depression and difficulty by the time the more serious pressure approached; and that, wherever the indications of a general failure of the harvest are unquestionable, the preliminary measures deemed requisite for meeting such a calamity should be at once taken in hand.

3. What these measures should be must, I am to submit, depend principally on the circumstances of the afflicted Province or District, and the facilities for supplying its food requirements from other quarters. Thus the case of a

District which is traversed by a line of railway, or in which water communication exists, would, under ordinary circumstances, be very different from that of one not possessing, or still more remote from, such means of communication, and it is for localities of the latter class that consideration is more especially required in dealing with this question, for it is in them that the effects of famine are most dire and terrible, as when once it has fairly established itself in Districts so circumstanced, relief to any appreciable extent cannot be conveyed to them.

4. On this point it should be remembered that the drought which causes the failure of the grain crops also withers up and destroys the forage, and probably dries up the wells and springs of the country affected by it, and that under such circumstances many Districts thus speedily become absolutely inaccessible. If the inhabitants of the remoter parts of such Districts are left wholly to their own means and arrangements during the earlier stages of what ultimately becomes a famine, there is infinite risk that they will trust to them till they are exhausted, and that their attempts then to get away to other localities, where food is to be had, will be attended with lamentable results.

5. There is, I am to submit, in the Chief Commissioner's opinion, but one real and practical precautionary remedy available for adoption in such cases as that here described, *viz.*, to encourage by every possible means the freest emigration in good time from Districts so circumstanced threatened with famine, to those not so threatened or at least accessible to supplies, where employment as private laborers on public works would probably generally be either obtainable, or might be provided for a considerable proportion at least of such refugees.

Those who have had experience of the effects of famine in remote Districts, especially in Native territory, know the danger of delay in such matters, and how the people, if left to themselves, cling to their homes till the last crust has almost been consumed. The terrible character of the journey that with women and children already stricken with want but little short of starvation they then strive to make to obtain relief, cannot be exaggerated. The

proportion of such parties that perish "by the way" on such occasions is always large; while the survivors reach the desired gaol in a condition but little removed from the last stage, and, in but two many instances, wholly past restoration.

6. Therefore, while suffering from want and high prices on such occasions, may for a time be treated as ordinary poverty as proposed by the Commissioner in the more favored localities. The Chief Commissioner would urge that from the first a different course should be adopted in respect of remote Districts, which are cut off from the means of relief, and that the people of the more distant or inaccessible parts of such Districts, who have not the means of supporting themselves during the probable duration of a famine, should be encouraged, and, if necessary, assisted to get away with their families from such localities while they are yet in a condition to do so, and to undertake labor for their support where it can be obtained or provided for them.

II.—With regard to the second head, under which the Commissioners summarise the course to be adopted in cases of "extraordinary poverty and want," *viz.*, the imposition of local taxation to provide for the relief of those requiring it, I am directed to submit that, while such a measure would probably be suitable and adequate in the form of a cess on property in towns containing many well-to-do or moneyed people in business, or on land in the permanently settled Districts, and even others in which a long period of prosperity has improved the condition of the landholders, farmers, and people generally, it would probably be found impracticable in many rural Districts in which the condition of these classes is of a less favored character, especially such as has become already impoverished from a succession of bad seasons.

7. In the case of zemindars holding their lands under the permanent settlement there would appear to be no doubt

as to the obligation they are under to provide for the poor, in such occasions, on their own estates, and the same principle might with some modification be, perhaps, fairly extended to Districts settled on the mouzahwar system; but the Chief Commissioner apprehends that it could hardly be so to those in which, as in Mysore, the ryotwar settlement prevails.

8. It will be seen from the enclosures that it has been suggested by some of the officers whose opinions are recorded therein that the "local funds" of Districts might be employed to afford relief on such occasions, and the Chief Commissioner is disposed to concur in this suggestion, though he considers that the application of these funds to such a purpose should only be permitted on a consideration of the special circumstances of each case, and not as a matter of course; and that it should only extend to the relief of sufferers in the rural Districts, and not in towns, in which local measures of relief should be adopted where necessary to supplement the ordinary efforts of private charity. If the local funds are inadequate to provide the sums required for the relief of rural distress on such occasions as are adverted to under this head, I am to submit that they might fairly be aided by Government grants for the purpose.

III.—With regard to the third head, under which the Commissioners have summarised the course to be taken on occasions of most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people, I am directed to submit that there can hardly be a question as to the course so suggested being that which is alone suited to the required object, and that the Chief Commissioner has no suggestion to offer on the subject, and fully concurs therein, and also in the remarks in paragraph 73 regarding the distribution of the duties thrown in this case on Government and the public.

9. The foregoing observations have been confined to a consideration of the points specially discussed in the paragraphs of the Famine Commissioners' Report referred to in

your letter; but I am to add that Colonel Meade considers that that noticed by the Judicial Commissioner, *viz.*, the giving every possible publicity during periods of famine to the actual marked price of grain in various localities, is of the very greatest importance, and should receive careful attention on such occasions.

10. In conclusion, I am instructed to express the Chief Commissioner's regret at the delay that has occurred in the submission of this report, which has been caused by the necessity of awaiting the replies of the officers addressed on the subject.

	Judicial Commissioner.	Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Public Works Department.	Superintendent of Coorg.	Superintendent of Nandidroog.	Superintendent of Ashtagram.	Superintendent of Nagar.
Ordinary poverty to be left to private charity.		When the demand for food cannot be supplied by local merchants, the Government is not only justified but bound to provide this exceptional necessity. It would thus be wise to be prepared when the first sounds of famine are heard. With regard to town population in the times of famine, the wealthy merchants, inhabitants, and even the military, can be taxed by a poor rate, and they can well afford to be so. But I think in large towns private charity usually is sufficient. The able-bodied poor could be employed on useful works and paid by grain. The blind, &c., can be fed at depôts.	Is of opinion that every able-bodied pauper applying for relief should be exported to some other place where food might be more plentiful, and there, if necessary, employed on public works.	Does not think it necessary to enter into the question of relieving ordinary poverty, as this point seems to have been sufficiently considered and disposed of by the conclusions of the Famine Commissioners.	States that in times of ordinary scarcity the resources of the people who are generally well off and private benevolence will suffice to procure supplies.	
Extraordinary poverty and want affecting considerable classes of the rural population, who ordinarily support themselves, to be a charge on the land, enforced by law.	Suggests that in times of scarcity information as to the actual market price of grain at every station might be collected and circulated every week by means of the District Gazettes, or by hand bills. The dissemination of correct information on this point would doubtless tend to keep the markets supplied. Regrets his inability to make any further suggestions on a subject he does not understand.	The better class of ryots will not beg, nor will they come to the depôts where relief is given. To these a grant of small loans should be given to purchase grain, to be repaid by easy instalments.	Submits that as regards the raising of funds in times of extraordinary scarcity no better plan could be devised than that of taxing the landholders and other wealthy classes directly according to their means. The objection to direct taxation would not apply to an impost levied in this way, as it would be only a temporary burden, and the necessity for it would be apparent to all. The funds raised might be disbursed in two ways,—*1st*, to increase the supply of food; and *2nd*, to diminish the number of consumers.	Ventures to suggest that no better source could be found than the "local funds" of districts. These constitute what may be termed the reserved funds of each district, and might, therefore, be fairly devoted to the mitigation of any great want arising in that District.	To make sudden and considerable disbursements of money, it might be more advisable to devise some means of establishing, in anticipation, a famine relief fund which should accumulate from year to year by self-imposed taxation, and be under the management of local committees of zemindars. The officer of the district should judge when the intensity of a famine or other calamity is such as to justify contribution being made from these funds for the relief of the rural poor.	States that difficulty would be met if any attempt is made to support, by purely local taxation, the greatest sufferers in any single talook, or group of talooks, in which scarcity amounting to famine arose, as he believes it is not possible to raise special taxation to any appreciable extent in such parts. It would be more practicable to obtain assistance from other localities where the crops were tolerably good, than to raise money in those in which the people were in want. Taking all the circumstances of the division into consideration, he is of opinion that local taxation in talooks visited by scarcity would be almost impracticable; but that it would be possible, and probably advantageous, to raise special funds by additional local taxation in the other more favored tracts of the division graduated according to the condition of each.
The most extreme famine affecting the majority of the people to be a charge on the general revenues of the country, and the subject of appeal to the charity of the general public throughout the country.		Exceptional cases require exceptional legislature; and if Government do not move at the first indications of famine, the next famine will prove itself just as disastrous as the former ones.	As observed in paragraph 5 of the Famine Commissioners' Report, Government should not interfere or levy any poor rates in ordinary seasons, extraordinary measures being left for adoption on extraordinary occasions.	The question to be considered is the source from which funds are to be derived when alleviating the effects of a famine. In a Native State like Mysore, where all past traditions are in direct application of its revenues to the succour of those on whom those revenues are largely dependent, the duty of making provision for the people, similar to that which is to be required of the zemindars of Bengal, is equally obligatory. In Mysore the ryots have been led to look to Government for alleviation on all occasions of distress arising from bad seasons.	Submits that the ordinary local funds (to be raised by a percentage on the revenue) should be freely made use of, and for this purpose a suitable reserve in each district (not necessarily to be designated a famine fund) should be always kept in hand. If requisite, advances to these funds from the imperial revenues might be made, to be repaid by instalments in more prosperous years, or, if necessary, by the levy of a temporarily increased percentage on the revenue.	

BANGALORE;
The 24*th October* 1870.

R. A. COLE, *Capt.*,
Officiating Secretary.

No. 54, dated Hyderabad, the 27th August 1870.

From—MAJOR W. TWEEDIE, Offg. 1st Asst. Resident, Hyderabad.

To—E. C. BAYLEY, ESQ., C. S. I., Secy. to the Govt. of India.

THE Resident has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential circular No. 2797, dated the 7th June last, forwarding copy of certain suggestions of the Famine Commissioners, and requesting an expression of Mr. Saunders's opinion in connection with the points therein raised.

2. Copies of the replies received from the officers who have been consulted on this subject, namely, the Commissioners of East and West Berar, and the Survey and Settlement Commissioner, Hyderabad Assigned Districts, are submitted, as directed, for the consideration of the Government of India.

From Commissioner of East Berar, No. 1377, dated 27th June 1870.
Ditto, West Berar, No. 2179, dated 15th July 1870.
From Survey and Settlement Commissioner, Hyderabad Assigned Districts, No. 717, dated 9th August 1870.

3. In the concluding sentence of the Famine Commissioners' suggestions, the principle is laid down that the obligation to support the poor, which attached to the Government while the Government was the great landholder of the country, has been transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindars, who now represent the Government *quoad* the land in those parts of India where proprietary rights in the soil, other than those of the Government itself, have been created. Mr. Saunders thinks the above view so plainly sound as not to admit of any debate. But applying it to the Province with the administration of which he is entrusted, namely, the Hyderabad Assigned Districts, where the ryotwaree system of land tenure prevails, it of course falls short of providing the remedy which, except, perhaps, in the more extreme cases of famine visitation, it is capable of suggesting in regard to the Districts above referred to; that is to say, Government is itself the landlord in Berar, and therefore, when all other means fail, the duty of saving the agricultural classes, and the people generally, from starvation in times of famine, must be considered as devolving on the Government itself. It is in determining how

this can best be done that the numerous difficult questions arising out of this subject are chiefly encountered.

4. As a preliminary feature of the discussion, Mr. Lyall's remark—"that it is seldom Government has any real substantial knowledge of the state of the crops, the prospect of the harvests, and the resources of the markets"—deserves consideration, since it is obviously of the highest importance that a sound and reliable system should be introduced of causing Government to receive the earliest possible intimation of the condition of the several Provinces in this respect. It will be seen that Major Nembhard, the Commissioner of East Berar, apparently differs a little from Mr. Lyall in this matter; for Major Nembhard writes as follows in his letter, of which a copy accompanies this :

> "A District Officer has ample warning of an impending famine. He knows pretty well what the outturn of the last harvest was. His trade statistics show him the exports and imports of the necessaries of life. The store of grain held by the local dealers is absolutely ascertained, and the ruling prices in his markets, when considered with the other matters I have noted, tell him pretty plainly what he may expect."

5. It seems likely from the context of the passage in which Mr. Lyall explains his views on the above point that his remarks refer rather to the inaccuracy or vagueness of the actual statistical tables of this nature, which are compiled in Districts, than to any alleged want of adequate information on these topics on the part of the District Officers themselves. It may, however, at all events be said that, whatever may be the existing defects in connection with this important matter, it would not be difficult to remedy them, and ensure the due rendition to the appointed central authority or authorities of the requisite data for enabling Government to adopt early measures whenever famine seemed approaching. The necessity of some special means being taken with this end in view is the first suggestion which Mr. Saunders has to offer in connection with the subject now before him.

6. Even in those parts of India where the rights in the land have been transferred to zemindars, there occur,

as is well known, large municipal communities, for whose relief in times of famine it is obvious that the landlords could not, in fairness, be taxed, and this view gives a certain amount of common ground on which Districts under the permanent settlement, and those under the ryotwaree system, admit of being considered side by side.

7. The question, as it appears to Mr. Saunders, is in what way shall legislative action be taken for the purpose of enabling the State in all parts of India alike to discharge its obligations to the people in general, as well as to those agricultural communities who stand to it in the relation of tenants, or even to the comparatively wealthy zemindars themselves, should these at any time be reduced to such necessities.

8. The introduction of a permanent poor law is counterindicated mainly by two considerations, namely, (1) it would tend to dry up the stream of private charity, and thus add to the number of occasions in which Government aid was wanted; and (2) it would have a widely evil effect in teaching a people, whose proclivity is towards looking towards any one rather than themselves for support, to remain supine in the prospect of difficulties which a little exertion on their part would serve to avert.

9. Both of these points may be illustrated by a reference to what occurred here in the autumn of 1866, when there was a kind of famine in the Districts surrounding Hyderabad, as well as in many other parts of India. In the Native town of Secunderabad, where the scarcity was much felt, the rich Natives came forward in large numbers, and in the most liberal manner, with subscriptions in aid of their perishing countrymen, and there was no deficiency in the funds supplied for the relief of all applicants. Thus, if there had been a poor tax in existence, it could not have answered the purpose more effectually than did the private liberality, which it would to a great extent, if not altogether, have superseded. During the same crisis—for it undoubtedly did form a crisis—many lakhs of public treasure were being expended in the adjoining city of Hyderabad, under the orders of His Highness the Nizam's Minister, in feeding the starving, so much so, that a regular influx of people set in from the surrounding country towards Hyderabad, where

so much food was to be got for the asking. The very individuals who had just been relieved in Secunderabad were to be seen hastening in crowds along the roads to Hyderabad, in order to apply for relief a second time there. Under our arrangements, it is true much of this would be preventible; but still the effect of too easily attainable State relief would, under all circumstances alike, be to arrest the efforts of the people to help themselves.

10. But supposing a time of difficulty to have come which has exhausted, in ineffectual attempts to tide it over, the last efforts of the local community, then in what way shall the State come forward to prevent all who have a moral claim upon it from starving? In answer to this question the following observations by Mr. Lyall may be quoted: "If we must have a law whereby the relief of the poor can be enforced in India by special rate, that law should make the Local Government act as poor law commissioners, with supreme power to determine when the rate is needed, and how it shall be assessed in town and country. In Berar the whole rate would not be laid on the land, for in times of distress the first cry is for remission of the land tax; but it will be best, I conjecture, to leave with the Local Government the adaptation of means to each particular end of the special remedy to each case."

11. The last clause of the passage just quoted seems to Mr. Saunders fairly to hit the mark. Taking into account the wide diversity of circumstances and conditions which characterizes the country under the Government of India, it would be hopeless to attempt legislation to suit each several Province, even if the varied features which are sure to be presented by each visitation of famine itself did not also tend to bar the way in the same direction. Perhaps, however, this general principle might safely be adopted as the basis of legislative enactment on this subject, namely, that, when in the opinion of the Local Government the time has fully come when the public treasury and the proceeds at credit of the local funds must be made available in order to save the lives of a famishing people, such treasure may be freely applied to the purpose required, always provided that the amount so expended shall, unless specifically remitted by the Supreme Government, be made good to

Government when a season of comparative plenty returns, by means of a special cess imposed upon the land, and upon the municipalities in certain fixed proportions to be determined by the circumstances of each case.

12. Beyond this it does not seem to Mr. Saunders either possible or necessary to push the provisions of merely prospective and precautionary legislation; and he believes that, under some such general and undefined legislative enactment as that proposed in the preceding paragraph, the dangers belonging to all enactments of this nature, namely, that the people reposing under the assured protection of Government would rest with folded arms both prior to the occurrence of a famine and after it was fairly at their doors, would be reduced to a minimum.

13. In conclusion, and reverting to the subject of poor relief in Districts under the permanent settlement, the remarks contained in the 9th to the 14th paragraphs of Major Nembhard's letter recommend themselves to Mr. Saunders's judgment, in as far at least as they restrict themselves to the point which they are designed to inculcate, namely, the expediency, nay the necessity, of relief being afforded to the tenants of the zemindars in question, not by means of arrangements made for that purpose by the zemindars themselves, but under a regular system organized and administered by the local District Officers, the expenditure being of course defrayed from the resources of the landholders. Even these resources, however, might in extreme cases fail, and the enactment legalizing the advance of money from the public treasury, the same to be afterwards refunded, would then become as applicable to the localities in question as to any other part of India.

No. 717, dated Poona, the 9th August 1870.

From—Lieutenant-Colonel W. C. Anderson, Survey and Settlement Commissioner, Hyderabad Assigned Districts.

To—Major W. Tweedie, Offg. 1st Asst. Resident, Hyderabad.

With reference to your letter No. 1829 of the 17th June last and appended correspondence,* I have the honor to offer the following remarks.

* Letter from Government of India, No 2797, dated the 7th June 1870, and extract from Report of Famine Commissioners.

2. I am happy to say that my knowledge of famines, such as we hear of as occurring in Bengal and Rajpootana, is confined to reading accounts of them. On this side of India though seasons of occasional scarcity do occur, yet they are confined locally within comparatively narrow limits, instead of extending over immense tracts as appears to be the common case elsewhere, thus the abundance of one District is generally available to supplement the deficiency of another. The condition of the people on this side of India is also generally such that a local failure of crops, though it doubtless produces considerable hardship among the laboring classes, does not cause the horrible misery which follows a similar visitation in other parts of India. Within the last five years, in two successive years, the fields in a tract of the Southern Mahratta Country, exceeding one thousand square miles, were from want of rain almost entirely unsown; but the accumulations from former years, to a small extent aided by special public works in some cases, afforded subsistence not only to the people of the District, but to immigrants from adjacent Districts where also scarcity more or less prevailed.

3. As regards Western India I do not think that the time has come when it is necessary to devise any special measures to meet the possible occurrence of famines. The variations of climate, within comparatively limited areas, are so great that occasional failure of the crops will be found to be localized within restricted limits; communications by railway and sea afford great facilities for the import of grain to localities where the demand is great, and the system of local funds organized in the last few years will always supply the means of undertaking public works sufficient to relieve extrême distress without, as a rule, any extraordinary call upon the general treasury. It is the general practice to hoard large quantities of grain as an insurance against a possible bad season, and the wages of agricultural labor are very generally still paid in kind. Thus the fixed agricultural population, which comprises about four-fifths of the whole, is pretty secure in seasons of scarcity; the classes which suffer most in Western India in seasons of scarcity are naturally the laborers without fixed employment, unattached to any farm, and those who in seasons of scarcity invariably emigrate from inland Districts,—these generally find the means of subsistence on public works. The general condition of the people in the towns is such, and the demand for labor so extensive, that their poorer classes have no difficulty in obtaining employment when able to work, or aid from private charity when unfit for labor.

4. The question in the present instance appears principally to relate to the permanently settled Provinces of B engal, where of late years the ravages of famine have been greatest; here the extremes of wealth and poverty meet,—the wealthy few in number, the mass of the population being little removed from the condition of the day-laborer. There appears to be but little, if any, admixture of an agricultural class holding an intermediate place in a state of such comparative affluenceas to enable them to bear up against even one season of failure of crops. The true

and only remedy for the evils now in question would appear to be some measure tending to the creation of such a middle class out of those who are now living from hand to mouth; any measure short of this cannot be called remedial—it is no more than palliative. The disease will still exist untouched; all that is done will but be to procure alleviation of suffering at times when the disease operates in its full intensity, the true source of the mischief remaining untouched.

5. The radical remedy for that economical disease which reduces all the agricultural population into the living from hand to mouth condition has been tried and found successful elsewhere, and may be comprised in a few words,—secure tenure, moderate land tax and individual responsibility for that land tax. Nothing could well exceed the depressed condition of the ryots of the Deccan part of the Bombay Presidency about 1836-40. Yet after the lapse of ten years, or about 1850, they were in a comfortable condition wherever the remedies above indicated had been applied, and this not only without any sacrifice but actually with an increase to the revenue, which has, moreover, been secured on so firm a basis that seasons of utter scarcity do not affect the collections to any but the most inconsiderable extent.

6. But the rights of the zemindars have become, it is to be feared, a fact against which the wrongs of the mass of the people cannot as yet prevail. Under any circumstances, to effect any great change in the condition of the people would be a work of time, while the evil to be met is recurrent, and, moreover, may occur again any year.

7. The idea is widely diffused, whether wrongly or rightly, that the zemindars themselves were to a great extent both the cause of the last famine in Bengal taking so calamitous a form, and of the visitation which has recently fallen upon the empire in the form of taxation in an unpopular form. Should another call be made on the benevolence of the people of India to meet the shortcomings of these zemindars, whether real or imaginary, it is not impossible that the response may be less ready than it was on a previous occasion. For this as well as other reasons it would not be expedient to trust too largely to private charity on a large scale in the event of a time of need again coming round. The ready response would be—if those who draw their wealth from the land keep those who create that wealth poor in good seasons, it is their business and not ours to feed them in bad seasons.

8. It appears to me that it would be a mistake to wait for the occurrence of an actual famine or extreme scarcity before putting remedial measures in train,—the mischief would be done while the cure was under discussion. What is required is some plan which would, in the first place, do something to improve the condition of the people, as far as is possible under the existing land tenures, and next provide a fund available to meet any sudden call without imposing

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additional taxation on the rest of the empire. The liability of zemindars appears to be beyond a doubt not only morally but on the terms of the settlement. It only remains for the State to enforce that right in whatever mode appears most advisable and just. A special cess on the land at the very time of need would not be the most expedient means of provision; it would probably be less readily met then than at any other time, and the amount would not be at once available.

Paragraph 70, Famine Report.

9. I would advocate permanent local taxation based on the present revenues of estates; of the sum so raised, three-fourths to be spent in local improvements, communications, &c., for the general benefit of the people, and the other fourth I would propose to fund so as to form a reserve available in case of special need for famine works, or the relief of distress in whatever way might appear most desirable. When this reserve, or famine insurance fund, attained to as large an amount as appeared necessary, further addition to it might cease, and the whole local fund realizations be annually devotable to works of improvement. Thus in extreme cases of famine only would it be necessary to give aid from the general revenues of the country.

10. The administration of this fund would be a mere matter of detail. But the officer in charge of the District should be the director of whatever subordinate agency might be made use of. If left in the hands of local committees, dissipation of the funds would infallibly be the result.

11. I would especially deprecate the devotion of local funds or famine grants to extensive works of irrigation in preference to minor works, wherever practicable, scattered over the country. The great work is expensive, the benefits and returns long deferred, and a certain degree of doubt must, from past experience, always attend its ultimate result, both has regards irrigational power and financial success. These objections all apply in a very reduced degree to small works, which have, besides, the inestimable advantage of being more widely diffused and, therefore, include the greatest number of people within the range of their beneficial action, and within the smallest interval of time between commencement and construction.

12. In the Bombay Presidency, in some Districts, subject to deficient monsoons, well irrigation has been found a resource of incalculable value. In tracts of doubtful fall of rain, where wells do not already exist and water can be found within even forty or fifty feet of the surface, every possible aid should be afforded to the people to sink them.

13. It may appear presumption on my part giving any opinion bearing on the relations of agricultural society in Bengal, with which I have no more than a paper acquaintance; but I do so in obedience to a call for suggestions on the subject which I have endeavoured to make on a consideration of admitted facts and broad principles which are independent of special local knowledge.

No. 2179, dated Akola, the 15th July 1870.

From—A. C. Lyall, Esq., Commissioner of West Berar.

To—Major W. Tweedie, Offg. First Asst. Resident, Hyderabad.

The enclosures sent down with your letter No. 1828 of 17th June 1870 proposed for discussion the questions—Whether a poor law should be enacted for India? If so, what kind of law? I have now the honor to submit the report required by the Resident, though the subject is too important and too complicated to be adequately treated within the ordinary limits of an official letter.

2. It was quite clear more than two years ago that some proposition for organizing a regular and permanent system of relief to the Indian poor in times of dearth and famine must soon come on for debate, since the practice could not continue of making emergent grants from the imperial treasury. I understand the Commissioner now to propose that all extraordinary cases of want and wide-spread destitution, except extreme and over-powering calamities, shall be met by some system of local taxation.

3. It will not be disputed that the Supreme Government alone is able to cope with the crisis of any great famine catastrophe, for such events no law is needed. The point for argument is, I conceive, whether calamities of the second magnitude should be now anticipated by passing some law to charge the business of relief upon *local* resources and *local* authorities.

4. As my opinion has been required, I must say that I dread very much the introduction of any poor law into India, where the evils which must everywhere follow the system will be heavier than they have been found to be in Europe. In this country an immense number of persons, besides the crowd of professional beggars, ask for and expect nothing from their toil beyond the mere sustenance of life. To withdraw from them the direct fear of starvation is to remove the only stimulus to work. Then the effect of a poor law may be very serious upon our vast population of peasant cultivators, who may be tempted to desist from cultivation in a bad season if they see any prospect of being fed during a time of dearth; and of course this contraction of the cultivated area (which does actually occur rather sharply in ryotwaree Districts like Berar after a bad year) must tend to realize the apprehensions which created it.

5. It may be debated also whether the evils of a poor law, which is kept in store to be produced at need, like a medicine only given when disease breaks out, are much less than if the law were constantly in operation, for; though the doors of the Indian relief house will not stand always open, yet people will soon learn that they can be pushed open by pressure, and they will be liable to be besieged at the first alarm. There is one positive advantage on the side of the perpetual

poor law that it always has its system in regular working order; it can enforce strict rule and condition, its houses and officials are there at hand; the folk know what to expect. But machinery only brought into play at imminent need is sure to be found a good deal out of gear; the rates, the assessment, the relief to be given, the persons entitled to relief, all these things will have to be settled in a hurry by inexperienced persons. We shall be no better off for system and method than we are now.

6. However, it is probable that all the considerations which tell for and against introducing some sort of poor law into India have long ago been weighed by the Government. If then we must have some legal provision for extraordinary scarcities (not amounting to destructive famines), I suppose that the funds must be raised by local taxation, for I admit that they should not be taken from the ordinary imperial revenue. But the task of deciding when, how, and to what amount, this emergent relief should be given, will be so onerous and vitally important to the nation that I would never intrust it to local authorities or committees. Moreover, I believe that a system of poor law Districts within which the officers or a jury of the inhabitants should manage their own poor law, is open in India to strong practical objections.

7. When a poor law is, as in England, perpetually in force throughout the country, you can work its assessment by Districts; but where it is kept in reserve for emergencies, you lose all unity of action by leaving to District officials or juries the discretion of using or suspending it. When one impulsive District has set the law in play, it is the obvious interest of adjoining Districts to hang back and let their neighbours' relief fund draw off the superfluous poor. This would very soon bring about a demand for some sort of law of settlement, but I cannot conceive that any such settlement (in the English poor-law sense) is possible in India. The poorer folk wander all over the empire; they travel hundreds of miles in pursuit of high wages, cheap food, or charity. We could not, I think, define what persons have a right to subsist in any particular District, yet, unless we restrict in some manner the claims to which any one District may be liable, we must insist that a group of Districts at least be brought under some uniform and simultaneous poor law system.

8. To be brief, my point is that an *occasional* poor rate, though it may be raised by a local tax, cannot be introduced at local discretion, or administered locally. The Commissioners write of calling a jury to assess a *pergunnah;* the solidarity among Districts, even among *Provinces*, is so great in India, that I believe no officer with less scope of administration than the chief of a Province or of Provinces should determine the when, where, and how, of laying on a poor rate. It will be found an extremely delicate operation so to adjust your emergent relief as to avoid interference with the ebb and flow of population by which the country now relieves itself in times of distress. Here, in Berar in 1868-69, there were famine works open on both sides of

us in Chanda and in Khandeish, while the demand for labor and the rate of wages were, so far as I could discover, as high as ever in this Province. We must, I think, discard all idea of drawing analogies from England. India is still a country with its population very unequally distributed, with Provinces that have been cut off from each other by physical obstacles. Now that these obstacles are being removed by improved roads and universal security, the people are flowing abroad all over this continent, and filling up the vacant spaces, any organized system of localizing public charity by making the tax-payers responsible for the poor within their District limits will be likely to check this natural process of remedying inequalities.

9. Then the Commissioners seem to recommend that relief of the poor in *towns* be left to private charity. It may be possible and politic to dissociate the system of relief in great cities from that used in the country round them, but I cannot see how the interests of the community can be thus distinguished in a Province like Berar, which has only some decent country towns. Here again we are met by the want of some law to define *who* should be relieved; for if public relief and private charity are left to work side by side, it may be guessed that private persons will modestly decline to compete with State, and that the town paupers will all gradually emigrate to the country relief houses.

10. It is my opinion, therefore, that if we *must* have a law whereby the relief of the poor can be enforced in India by special rate, that law should make the Local Government act as poor law commissioners, with supreme power to determine when the rate is needed, and how it shall be assessed in town and country. In Berar, the whole rate could not be laid on the land, for in times of distress the first cry is for remission of the land tax; but it will be best, I conjecture, to leave with the Local Government the adaptation of means to each particular end. Of the special remedy to each case I should say that it would be quite sufficient to invest Government with some general power of this kind, the more vague and undefined the better, for it is an object not to familiarize the country with the idea of special provision; the more you localize, the more you familiarize, and people get to think they have a kind of *claim* on any local rate or local institution.

11. I am quite convinced, I repeat, that the power of putting in force an emergent poor law cannot be entrusted to District Officers. From the experience of the last three years I venture even to doubt whether it will be very cautiously used even in the hands of provincial chiefs. I may stand alone in my opinion, but I think that, since the Orissa famine shook the nerve of our governors, we have been too ready to raise the alarm of famine. "If there should be a further failure of rains (said the *Government of India Gazette* of September 1868), preparations must be made for a *great calamity*," and further on—" there is still a period of two months for preparing to meet *what may be*

a very terrible calamity." Now all great variations in corn prices are produced not by the deficiency but by the *apprehension* of it, and we should carefully abstain from raising that apprehension, unless we are quite certain that it is well founded and positively necessary. But how very seldom it is that the Government has any real substantial knowledge of the state of the crops, the prospect of the harvests, and the resources of the markets. Most of our agricultural returns are widely wrong, and are usually compiled by unskilled persons. Is there not some ground for supposing that prices are sometimes unnaturally and very prematurely excited by official vaticinations of calamity and starvation?

No. 1377, dated Oomrawuttee, the 27th June 1870.

From—MAJOR W. NEMBHARD, Commr., East Berar.

To—MAJOR W. TWEEDIE, Offg. 1st Asst. Resident, Hyderabad.

I HAVE the honor to acknowledge your letter No. 1827, dated 17th June 1870, forwarding copy of a circular letter from the Government of India, Home Department, No. 2797, dated 7th idem, with enclosure, relative to the question of the future liability of the country to famine, and requesting an expression of my views on the means proposed by the Orissa Famine Commission to mitigate such calamities.

2. The measure proposed by the Commission is this—that to relieve not ordinary poverty, but the wider poverty of extraordinary occasions among the rural populations, some system of local taxation should be instituted by which the richer persons of each neighbourhood may be made to bear the burden of local and partial famine, so far as local means will suffice, before, as a last resource in graver cases, resort is had to the general taxation and the general charity of the country.

3. The Commission then point out that the obligation of the zemindars holding under the permanent settlement to support the poor of their estates has always been asserted by the officers of Government, and has not been denied by the zemindars themselves, although effect has not yet been given to the obligation by precise law, and the consequence is that it has been in practice ignored and evaded.

4. The Commission justly call attention to the obligation which attached to the Government while it was the great landholder of the country, and which was transferred with its correlative rights to the zemindars, and I heartily concur in the recommendation that the obligation should be put into practical operation by legislative enactment rendering the zemindars liable to taxation for the support of their starving poor.

5. But that obligation did not bind the Government only as far as Bengal Proper is concerned; the Government was bound by it in

whatever part of the country it reserved to itself the rights and privileges of proprietorship. I should think many, if not all, Native Chiefs will acknowledge this obligation as regards their khalsa possessions. It is only in regard to estates granted by them in jageer to their relatives and high officers and others that they hold themselves absolved from the obligation which passed over with the grant to the jageerdar who is in Native States a *quasi*-proprietor. I have no means of reference at hand, but I have no doubt that proof sufficient to satisfy the most sceptical can be adduced to show that this obligation has existed from the very earliest period in the history of this country.

6. In many parts of India, and especially of the Bengal Presidency, the Government has transferred its rights as proprietor of the soil to private individuals, either by sale or as a free gift. It would be absurd to argue that Government transferred only what was beneficial, and had reserved to itself all that was prejudicial to its interests. In conceding its rights it also shifted off its obligations, and in the subsequent enjoyment and exercise of those rights by the parties who sought and accepted them, we find our warrant for enforcing when necessary the obligation which inseparably attaches to them.

7. The fact that Government has hitherto refrained from enforcing the obligation, trusting to the good which private charity and its own large and liberal grants might do, is no argument against its insisting on the fulfilment by proprietors of land of their obligations whenever necessity may require.

8. So far then as legislating, with a view to lay down more clearly the liability of all proprietors of land to be taxed in times of famine for the support of the starving poor of their estates is concerned, I would give my warm support to the Commission's recommendations.

9. But I do not go with the Commission when they recommend that the landed proprietors shall, in the first place, be required "to support the poor of their estates by supplying food in return for labor to the able-bodied who are unable to obtain employment." This is to be a kind of trial of their willingness or otherwise to fulfil their obligation, and probably weeks may elapse before the result of the trial is known.

10. There are few of us who will have much doubt as to the result of the trial. Setting willingness or unwillingness aside, it most likely will so happen that the people—able-bodied or otherwise,—are starving just at a time when the landowners do not require labor of any kind; when, in fact, the crops are standing in the fields withered and ruined by drought or blight, or other cause, and when, perhaps, for months to come nothing can be done to the land, and as there are no crops to watch and weed and garner, so all hands on the estate are idle. What is the labor then which at such times the ordinary run of Indian landowners will take from the able-bodied poor in return for the food they supply? I may be told that the landowners would avail themselves of the

opportunity to make tanks and wells and roads about their estates; but I would ask does our experience of the landowners warrant us in assuming that they would, as a *rule*, trouble themselves about these improvements?

11. In the second place, where is the food to come from? It generally happens that when famine is impending a few of the principal bunneas or grain-dealers buy up every atom of grain in the District, and store it with a determination to make a fortune out of the starving population by retailing it at three or four seers per rupee. They know that in British territory not a soul will interfere with them; that if they chose to sell that which would save the lives of a hundred poor women and children against its weight in gold, the authorities must either buy it at that cost and relieve the starving people, or stand by and see them die by dozens at their feet. As trade goes by caste, so combination is the rule among our traders. It is especially so among grain-dealers, who never compete with one another unless incited by enmity. But though combination is the rule, "Stuart Mill" is our text book, and dare we go against his maxims.

12. The landholders then would have to pay a fearful price for the food. The very knowledge that we compelled them to feed the starving people of their estates would make the grain-dealers determine more than ever not to abate their prices.

13. Again, if we are to trust to the landowners importing large quantities of grain, the people will have passed through much misery before food reaches them. Natives cannot act promptly. Let the landholder urge how he may, the consignor will take his leisure, and by the time gunny bags are procured, pack-bullocks are yet to gather, and the journey accomplished, weeks will have passed, and famine will have numbered its many victims.

14. If we insist, as I think we certainly should do, on the landed proprietors supporting the starving poor of their estates in times of extraordinary poverty, then I think that Government should, on such occasions, come forward, and with that assistance which it alone can afford, aid them to fulfil their obligation at the lowest possible cost.

15. A District Officer has ample warning of an impending famine. He knows pretty well what the out-turn of the last harvest was; his trade statistics show him the exports and imports of the necessaries of life. The store of grain held by the local dealers is also easily ascertained, and the ruling prices in his markets, when considered with the other matters I have noted, tell him pretty plainly what he may expect. He should then lose no time in warning the Government, with whom he should communicate bi-weekly or daily, reporting the progress of events.

16. The District Officer should then assemble the principal landowners about him, and be guided in a measure by their advice. When he and they are satisfied that famine is really at hand, and that

nothing is likely to stave it off, he should telegraph at once to Government.

17. On receipt of the first warning the Government will have lost no time in ascertaining in what places in the neighbourhood of the District threatened with famine grain in considerable quantities is procurable. The authorities of those places, as well as those on the lines of railway, should be informed *confidentially* that they may be required at a moment's notice to export grain in large quantities to such and such a place.

18. Having made these preparations, the old matter should be placed in the hands of one member of the Government, who will then move the strings in future, subject to the orders of the Governor General in Council, or the head of the Local Government, as the case may be. With this member the Collector of the famine-stricken District should correspond direct, either by letter or telegram, on all subjects immediately connected with the famine.

19. The advantage of having one member of the Government alone to take the famine in hand is obvious. It will save the issue of hurried and conflicting orders; he will receive from time to time the indents of the Collector, showing what quantity of grain is required to keep the people from starving, and he will arrange his consignments accordingly. This will save, what we so often see, a quantity of grain being thrown into a famine-stricken District from all directions just when it is beginning to recover itself; and as the grain cannot be returned to the place whence it was consigned, it is sold for just what it will fetch, entailing a heavy loss on the Government.

20. The consignments of grain, as they arrive, would be received by the Collector and his committee of landowners, and would be by them distributed daily, or as they may arrange, to the starving poor of the villages.

21. As the consignments are made by Governm nt at the instance and cost of the landowners, we may be pretty sure that the grain will not be unduly wasted. The Collector will keep an account showing the number of maunds made over to each landowner, and in the same way each landowner will make a memorandum of the number of seers of grain given by him to each able-bodied man on his estate.

22. The money expended by Government in purchasing the grain, and in forwarding it to its destination, will be debited against the landowners of the famine-stricken District as a tucavee advance repayable (if the amount be large) in five or more years, and realizable as arrears of land revenue. The collector will allot the gross amount rateably among the landowners according to the account which he has kept, and it shall be competent to each landowner to recover, without

interest, from each of the following persons, by five or more yearly instalments, the actual amount of grain (or its equivalent in money, if the recipient of relief so prefer it) which was advanced to him during the famine :

(1.)—Sub-proprietors of land.

(2.)—Hereditary tenants cultivating at fixed rents during the currency of the settlement.

(3.)—Tenants-at-will cultivating five or more than five acres of dry crop land, or of rice land, paying a money rent for the same.

(4.)—Cultivators of garden produce who pay an annual money rent of above Rupees 20 for their land.

23. There remain three classes which are found in every village, *viz.*, the village traders, the artizans, and the village servants. The traders will generally look out for themselves, nor do I think that the landowner should be bound to provide for them. The better classes of artizans might recoup the landlord by working for him, a day's labor being equivalent to five seers of grain. The village servants should not be liable to a refund.

24. In mitigating the evils of famine, prompt and decisive action is of vital importance. All the regular channels of official communication should be put aside for the occasion. The Collector of the famine-threatened District will do ten times the good if he have no Commissioner or Board of Revenue to refer to. If he were not fit for a sudden emergency and for the responsibility attaching to it, he would not be in the position he is. The intermediate authorities between the Collector of a District and the Government can, after all, do little, or I may say nothing, to meet the emergency, for this reason that they cannot sanction the *immediate* expenditure of money to any extent, while the necessity of submitting through them every letter and report connected with the famine involves at times fatal delay. These authorities would, of course, keep themselves acquainted with all that was going on, but the responsibility should be with the Collector, who would be in direct communication with the Government, which alone can sanction without a moment's delay the necessary expenditure, and can at the same instant order the supplies of grain to be forwarded.

25. When the Collector finds that any landowner does not discharge the obligation attaching to him, and that the poor on the estate are starving, food should be supplied to them direct through a committee of landowners ; and while the recusant proprietor is liable for the grain supplied to his people, the fact of his recusancy should bar his recouping himself from any of the persons mentioned in paragraphs 22 and 23.

26. Thus, while ordinary poverty would be left to private charity, extraordinary poverty among the rural classes would be met in the manner I have proposed, namely, by enforcing the obligation which attaches to every proprietor of land in India to support his tenantry and dependants at such times, with permission to recoup himself hereafter from those who are well able to refund gradually the food supplied to them in a time of dire necessity, and to which they in all probability owe their lives. Extreme famine affecting the majority of the people would, as stated by the Commission, be a charge on the general revenues, and be the subject of appeal to the charity of the general public throughout the country.